THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

A SURVEY OF JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL ENGLISH OPTIONS IN ALBERTA

by

© RUTH IRENE BOHNEC

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies for acceptance, a thesis entitled "A Survey of Junior High School English Options in Alberta," submitted by Ruth Irene Bohnec, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to determine, by means of analysis of the data obtained from questionnaires that were sent to a representative sample of teachers, the nature of English options programs in Alberta junior high schools. Of special interest to the researcher were teacher qualifications and experience, teacher attitudes toward options, characteristics of options programs, and factors related to the success or failure of such programs.

With regard to teacher training and experience, the researcher found that a majority of teachers of English options had a minimum of four years of teacher education and at least four years of teaching experience. Very few teachers had training in curriculum building.

With regard to teacher attitudes toward English options, a majority of teachers felt there was some merit in offering such options at the junior high school level. A majority also felt that the options they were teaching were of value to students.

The researcher found that English options programs were characterized as follows: teachers were given a good deal of choice in deciding which option to offer; teachers were almost totally responsible for building their own options curriculum; there was not very much cooperation among teachers in developing programs; options offered a fairly high degree of specialization; teachers felt there had been at least some

attainment of objectives; students had a fair degree of choice in electing English options; teachers felt that options were meeting student interests to a fairly great extent; classes in general tended toward high enrollment; teachers did not attach very much importance to grades; students were given a fair amount of freedom in deciding how course requirements would be met; most English options were being offered for more than eighty minutes per week; and a wide variety of courses were being offered, with reading and general language arts being offered most frequently.

With regard to the factors that influenced the success or failure of programs, those seen by teachers as having had the most highly positive effects were student enthusiasm, administrative cooperation, teacher training in English, and teacher training in curriculum building. Those seen as having had the most negative effects were lack of resources, lack of student freedom in electing programs, lack of student interest, and lack of planning time.

A majority of teachers felt that their English options programs were successful in some respects but unsuccessful in other respects.

In general, the findings of the study are optimistic with regard to the achievement of the objectives that were defined for such options.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO THE PROBLEM

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The introduction of academic electives into the curriculum of Alberta junior high schools is a relatively new phenomenon, having been started in 1969. This study was done to determine the nature of the English electives programs being offered and to try to focus upon some of the major difficulties faced by teachers in developing English options at this level.

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

At the time that academic electives first became operational in Alberta junior high schools, changes were made in the structure of the curriculum in order to allow students a wider range of choices in their educational experiences. Curriculum content was divided into three categories: core subjects, which included the compulsory subjects of Language Arts, Social Studies, Mathematics, Science, Physical Education, and Health; group A options, which included the cultural and practical arts, which were to be taken on an elective basis, and for which course outlines were to be provided; and group B options, which were academic electives and for which course outlines were to be developed by individual teachers and schools.

Perhaps the underlying philosophy of the changes that were made will best be explicated by looking at some quotations from the 1970 Junior High School Handbook of the Alberta Department of Education, which states the functions of the junior high school as follows:

> The junior high school must provide a transition from a common program in which there are virtually no electives in the elementary school to one in which there is pupil selection of programs and courses. Through varied procedures, such as differentiated programs and non-graded patterns of organization, the junior high schools should provide for the diverse interests and capabilities of the students.[1]

The guide further asserts that one of the functions of the junior high school is:

> ...to provide a breadth of curricular offering suited to the needs and interests of twelve- to fifteen-year-old youth, and to permit, wherever feasible, student selection of educational experience.[2]

With regard to the purpose of both group A and group B options, the handbook states:

> The chief purpose of these subjects in the junior high school program is to give every pupil an opportunity to explore his growing interests and abilities in cultural and practical subjects other than those taken as compulsory.... It is...important that the interests of the pupils be carefully cultivated and that special abilities, where they appear, be developed to the maximum.[3]

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[1] Junior High School Handbook, Alberta Department of Education, 1970, p. 1.

[2] Ibid., p. 4.

[3] Ibid., p. 5.

Further statements are made regarding the structure of the academic elective and the time to be allotted to this type of activity:

> The academic electives...will not be structured in that the course outline will be prescribed. It is anticipated that schools or school districts will structure the courses so that the topics investigated do not substantially overlap the topics investigated in core courses.[4]

With regard to time allotment, the guide stipulates:

> The range of time allotment is designed to permit flexibility in the program to adapt it to the needs, interests, and abilities of students and teachers. The time allotment for each option ranges from 75 to 175 minutes per week.[5]

The handbook stipulates that the Language Arts option may be a general course or may concentrate on one aspect of the study of English, such as creative writing, literature, oral skills, or reading.

These, then, were the guidelines under which the academic electives, including English options, were originally instituted into the Alberta junior high school curriculum. This study attempted to assess the extent to which the actual school program was reflective of the original objectives set down for it. An attempt was made to determine the nature of the present English options being offered, to explore some of the influential factors related to the success and/or failure of the program, and

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[4] Junior High School Handbook, Alberta Department of Education, 1970, p. 6.

[5] Ibid., p. 6.

to make some recommendations that might work toward its improvement.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The basic purpose of this study was to conduct a survey of English options being taught in the junior high schools of Alberta. Included in the study were the following purposes:

1. To examine the qualifications of teachers of English options.
2. To determine the characteristics of English options programs that were in existence at the time of the study.
3. To determine what factors were most influential in determining the success and/or failure of these options programs.
4. To assess the attitudes of teachers toward these options.
5. To determine to what extent teachers felt that the objectives of these options were being attained.
6. To determine the nature of the courses that were being taught, including content, materials, objectives, and methods of teaching.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PROBLEM

Whenever a new program is introduced into the school system there is a certain amount of controversy as to its

desirability, its merits, and its feasibility. In the case of such programs as the new options in junior high school, there is a need to evaluate what is being done, especially since, as was previously stated, these programs were not based upon any body of research which would justify their wide acceptance. Unless it is possible to show that such programs are educationally sound and that they are really attaining the objectives that were defined for them at their inception, it is difficult to defend their continued existence.

This study was an attempt to evaluate the extent to which the courses being offered in the area of English options were justified in terms of how well they were in fact fulfilling the expectations of the Department of Education when they made provision for the offering of such programs.

A further significance is lent to the study by its practicality, since one of its major objectives was to gather together a body of ideas and materials to be used by teachers in developing their programs. Teachers in this province have not traditionally been given either the freedom or the responsibility to develop their own courses of study. Many of them have little or no training in curriculum building. It was felt by the researcher that such a study would help to make up for this lack.

SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The results and implications that resulted from this study were limited to the Alberta scene in English options at the junior high school level. The study was limited to the English options being offered in the school year 1971-72. It may therefore have excluded some good ideas that emerged either just prior to or immediately after the study.

With regard to the teacher appraisals of the extent to which their original objectives had been attained, there is the drawback that many courses had not been completed at the time the questionnaires were sent, so that teachers were sometimes asked to assess this attainment before the end of the option.

Many of the questionnaire items called for an opinion or a value judgment on the part of the teachers concerned. The answers to such questions are naturally subject to the limitations usual to questions of this type.

Many teachers failed to complete some parts of the questionnaire. This resulted in incomplete data for some items, which placed a further limitation on the conclusions drawn by the researcher.

The scope of the study included such aspects of the program as: teacher training and experience; teacher, student, and administrative attitudes towards English options; characteristics of options presently being taught in Alberta; factors influencing the success of programs; and course descriptions of options being taught.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

English option refers to any Language Arts course of study that is not a part of the compulsoy core curriculum.

Objectives is used in two different senses. In one sense, it refers to the outcomes of the program as envisioned in the guidelines set forth in the Junior High School Handbook for 1970. In another sense it refers to the objectives of each course of study that are set down by the teacher of each course. The meaning that is intended has been made clear in the various parts of the study where this is necessary.

Resources for the purposes of this study refers to materials, books, and equipment and not to personnel.

Qualifications includes years of teacher training, years of teaching experience, number of English courses completed at a post-secondary institution, and number of courses completed in curriculum, exclusive of methods courses.

PROCEDURE AND ORGANIZATION FOR REPORTING DATA

This research report is organized as follows:

Chapter I states the objectives of a survey of English options in Alberta junior high schools, gives some background to the study, states the problem, discusses the significance of the problem, discusses the scope and the limitations of the study, and defines the terms used.

Chapter II discusses the scarcity of research in this area, surveys some expert opinions regarding some of the desirable characteristics of programs of this nature, and summarizes the objectives of English options programs as outlined in the Alberta Department of Education's 1970 Junior High School Handbook.

Chapter III contains the design of the study, including a description of the research design, a discussion of sampling procedures, a description of the data-gathering instrument, and a discussion of procedures used in presenting the research report.

Chapter IV contains analysis of the data, which is presented under the following headings: qualifications of teachers of junior high school English options, attitudes of teachers toward English options, general characteristics of English options, and factors influencing the development of English options programs.

Chapter V contains the conclusions and recommend-

ations that resulted from the study. Suggestions for further study are also made in this section.

In the appendices are to be found the following: a copy of the letter that was sent to school principals, a complete copy of the questionnaire, a list of comments of personnel involved in developing English options programs, a complete description of courses being taught, and a list of the schools which participated in the study.

CHAPTER II
A REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

SCARCITY OF RESEARCH IN THE AREA OF ENGLISH OPTIONS AT THE SECONDARY SCHOOL LEVEL

The trend toward offering academic options is a relatively recent phenomenon throughout North America, as it is in Alberta.

Whereas most educational innovations come about as a result of research, this has not been the case in the area of academic electives, which have come about largely because of the dissatisfaction of teachers with the traditonal curriculum, particularly in the field of English education. It was felt that options would allow teachers and students to explore in greater depth certain aspects of subject areas that could not be explored within the confines of a core curriculum.

Change does not occur spontaneously. It is seldom or never without precedent or influence from certain sources. The tendency to broaden the curriculum to include academic options, it is interesting to note, comes at a time when there is a general educational trend towards giving students more freedom in the selection of their educational experiences. It comes, too, at a time when there is ever-increasing pressure to allow teachers more freedom in making curriculum decisions.

In the field of English options at the junior high school level, there is no record of any research being done in any of the major journals of educational research, either to suggest that offering options is defensible according to empirical evidence of its success, or to evaluate existing programs.

Evidence that interest in this area of research is growing is, however, attested to by the fact that the National Council of Teachers of English has commissioned a study to look into English options at the secondary school level. The study is being financed by ERIC and is being done by George Hillocks, Jr., at the University of Chicago. At the present time, the results of his study are not yet available. His study focusses upon English options at the secondary level that are presently being offered in American schools, particularly in inner city schools.

The fact that these options are a widespread and growing phenomenon, coupled with the fact that little or no research has been done, suggests the great need for both research into what is being done and evaluation of programs.

AN EXAMINATION OF THE 1970 JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL HANDBOOK OF THE ALBERTA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

In the background to the study presented in Chapter One were presented all the relevant sections of the handbook having to do with desirable characteristics of the junior high school options. There remains only to list here the characteristics mentioned as desirable, which are as follows:

1. A suiting of options programs to the needs and interests of the students.
2. A permitting, where feasible, of student selection of educational experiences.
3. The adoption of such innovations as modular scheduling, team teaching, and non-grading.
4. Development of special abilities of students, wherever they appear.
5. A structuring of options so that they do not substantially overlap topics investigated in core courses.
6. Flexibility in the program to adapt it to the needs, interests and abilities of students and teachers.
7. A time allotment of between 75 and 175 minutes per week for this type of activity. (This is for core B options only).

An attempt was made in the study to see how well these objectives for options were being attained in the schools.

A BRIEF SUMMARY OF EXPERT OPINION REGARDING DESIRABLE CHARACTERISTICS OF ENGLISH OPTIONS PROGRAMS

Many of the English options programs that have been developed in North American secondary schools, including those in Alberta high schools, have been modelled largely upon the type of program that was pioneered in Trenton, Michigan, in 1966. Called APEX (Appropriate Placement for Excellence in English), this program had as its major objective a phasing of courses according to level of difficulty so that a number of electives appropriate to various levels of ability could be offered and so that students could select, with the aid of teachers, English programs which were best suited to their interests and needs. Even though the Alberta programs do not necessarily follow the entire format as set down by APEX, they do seek to meet the stipulations of the program with regard to the desirable characteristics of successful programs.

In <u>APEX, A Non-Graded Phase-Elective English Curriculum</u>, the underlying philosophy of the program is set down as follows:[6]

1. Personalized, tailor-made education for each student is one of the important ultimate goals of language arts education.
2. The chronological age of a student is not as relevant a factor in grouping him with other students for learning as is his ability, interests, and needs.
3. Students with assistance from teachers, counselors, and parents are capable of making wise choices about what they should learn.
4. There is no single English course devisable that is so sacred that every student must take it before he graduates.

5. There is no reason why courses must be a year in length.
6. A "minimum" level of achievement in the language arts before graduation that would be applicable and meaningful for all students cannot be devised.
7. Under most circumstances, grouping students with others of similar ability, interest, and need is a reasonable and wise thing to do in order to facilitate ease and effectiveness of both teaching and learning.
8. Teachers should be allowed to teach their forte (to specialize) in language arts in order to promote quality instruction.
9. There is no reason why sophomores, juniors, or seniors all with similar interests, abilities, and needs could not be in the same class together.
10. One of the basic goals of a language arts program should be to promote growth on an individual basis in each of the following skills: reading, writing, speaking, listening, and thinking.
11. The basic language arts skills can be learned in a variety of ways, and if it is assumed that each course in a curriculum contained activities designed to promote growth in each of these skills, it therefore makes relatively little difference which combination of courses a student selects as long as they meet his abilities, interests, and needs.
12. Curriculum design should begin with students' interests, abilities, and needs rather than content, available anthologies, or teacher preference.

The APEX program stressed the importance of such characteristics as individualization, absence of grade tracks or levels, choice on the part of students, no rigid course requirements, time length, or achievement standards, teacher specialization, grouping, non-grading, individualized growth, and curricula built around students' interests, abilities, and needs.

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[6] APEX, A Non-Graded Phase-Elective English Curriculum, United States Office of Education, 1966, p. 221.

Some further characteristics that are desirable to the success of English elective programs are summed up by Ann Jaekle in her recent English Journal article, "Spontaneity with a Purpose: Elective English Programs", where she writes:[7]

> When these programs make a significant contribution to the curriculum, they connect with the real interests and the real needs of the students to communicate. A new order and structure evolves from the internal development of the students. They may not be all moving the same way, but they can all be working toward the same goals. This is organic curriculum making. Some students develop their own independent research, some communicate about drag racing or science fiction, others make films, while still others write poetry. The teachers in an elective system have many options for discovering and stimulating needs to communicate.

Jaekle was commenting on the progress that had been made in the 1960's in the area of English options, including such programs as APEX. It is not difficult to see reflected in her remarks the philosophy of those who began the APEX program. Jaekle, in speaking of spontaneity (which she feels is essential) with a purpose, explains what she means as follows:[8]

> ...when high school English departments provide elective units related to the real needs of a student to communicate, then we have a spontaneous English curriculum. When...high school English departments use...these personal needs and interests of students for important instructional goals in writing, reading, talking, dramatizing, and thinking, then we have spontaneity with a purpose.

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[7] English Journal, LXI (April, 1972), 529-30.

[8] Ibid., p. 530.

In explaining what some of the characteristics of a spontaneous curriculum are, she writes:

> Spontaneity in the English class characterizes... schools...which emphasize putting experience into words and concentrate on values like imagination, creativity, and humanism. Spontaneous English curriculums emphasize activities for personal growth: pantomiming, improvising, writing original scripts, publishing class magazines, criticizing one another's writing, interviewing members of the community on current problems, teaching younger students to read and write.... Such a curriculum encourages active interplay between the world, the students, and their language experiences and is necessary to avoid a stale and stagnant school experience.

With regard to classroom organization, she writes:[10]

> In the best English elective programs spontaneous grouping for a purpose takes the place of ability grouping. This spontaneous grouping is based on students' choices of a particular theme, a particular emphasis or activity, or a particular way to study. The teaching team provides options in content, activities, materials, and styles. The primary instructional goals are identified but are broad enough to allow for many different ways to accomplish them. Constant communication among students and openness between teacher and students are fostered.

In his article, "The New Supermarket: A 'Dystopian' View of English Electives", Roger J. Fitzgerald makes the criticism of such programs that they really do not offer students real freedom of choice and that they are not truly organic, since the courses are predetermined and the student has to select something that is "a foregone conclusion". In suggesting ways to improve on what has

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[9] Ibid., p. 530.

[10] Ibid., p. 531.

been happening, he suggests the following about the structure of the program:[11]

> If there is hope for authentic change in English, it does not reside in the mere reorganization and redistribution of subject matter--the reshuffling of quantities. Rather, it is to be found outside that well-worn cycle in the quality of relationships and processes that are part of English as an on-going activity: change perceived in the terms of medium not content. I am...suggesting...a structure which is open and flexible and which is its own content, not something to pour content into--and integration which is active, not passive. Such a structure would not be predetermined in any way, but would evolve out of the interaction of individuals through which a content, organic and unique, is established. A participatory structure, in other words, involving real freedom to shape the future out of the present, not the "initial" freedom to choose a foregone conclusion.

Expert opinion, then, focusses upon many desirable characteristics of English elective programs. They include such things as emphasis on student freedom and development as an individual; lack of emphasis on rigid marking systems, curricula, grades and tracking systems; curricula built around student interests and needs; the specialization of teachers in language arts and in special areas of the subject; emphasis on communication skills; and the curriculum as organic and changing.

This study attempted to see how well such characteristics were embodied in the English options programs that were offered in Alberta junior high schools.

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[11] English Journal, LXI (April, 1972), 548-9.

CHAPTER III

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

A DESCRIPTION OF THE RESEARCH DESIGN

Since classroom teachers are in the most advantageous position for evaluating the English options program that presently exists, it was decided by the researcher that the study would be undertaken by means of survey questionnaires sent to a representative sample of junior high schools in the province, the principals of which would be requested to distribute them to teachers of English options.

SAMPLING PROCEDURE

The sample of schools that took part in the study was obtained as follows: from the Alberta Department of Education's List of Operating Schools in Alberta, 1971-72 were selected all schools offering all three junior high school grades of seven, eight, and nine. If a school offered only the junior high school grades, it was included in the total list from which the sample was drawn if it had no fewer than ten teachers; if a school offered more than three grades it was included only if there were no fewer than twenty teachers in the school. The above steps were taken to ensure that a sufficient number of English teachers would be available in any given school to suppose that English electives might be offered. Since it was anticipated that the urban and rural schools might have different characteristics of English option programs and

that their problems in developing programs might differ, the lists of urban and rural schools were compiled and alphabetized separately. From the alphabetized lists of urban and rural schools, every third school was chosen to take part in the study, yielding a total sample of fifty-three urban and fifty-two rural schools. All schools that were located in one of Alberta's ten cities or their immediate environs were classified as urban. All other schools were classified as rural.

DATA-GATHERING PROCEDURE

Two-part questionnaires were sent to teachers of English options in participating schools. The number of questionnaires to be sent to each school was determined by estimation on the basis of total numbers of teachers in each school. Three weeks after the questionnaires were mailed, reminders were sent to those schools which had not yet responded. A cut-off date of April 20, 1972, was set for the return of questionnaires and the data was analyzed according to the responses that were received up to that time.

THE DATA-GATHERING INSTRUMENT

A copy of the complete questionnaire used in the study is to be found in Appendix B of this report. Only a brief description will be given here.

The instrument was constructed in such a way as to include all important facets of the English options program as mentioned in the 1970 Junior High School Handbook of the Alberta Department of Education and as considered important by experts in English education. An attempt was made to group related questions together in order to facilitate teacher response.

The first part of the questionnaire contained groups of structured-response items requiring responses on a five-point scale to such items as teacher qualifications, teacher opinions about the value of English options, general characteristics of English options programs presently in existence, and factors that have affected the development of English options.

The second part of the questionnaire was a free-response section the purpose of which was to determine the nature of English options being taught, including titles of options, course content, materials, special activities, and methods of classroom organization and teaching.

In part one of the questionnaire, the first group of questions required information about years of teacher education, years of teaching experience, number of post-secondary English courses completed, and number of courses completed in curriculum building, exclusive of methods courses.

The second set of items asked for teacher opinions as to the merit of offering English options in junior high school and the value of options to students.

The third group attempted to determine the characteristics of English options programs that existed at the time of the study.

The fourth and fifth groups of questions were concerned with determining what factors were most influential in determining the success and/or failure of English options programs. Since part four was a totally structured attempt to determine the degree of influence that various factors had, the fifth group of questions was left unstructured in order to allow teachers to mention factors which may have been overlooked.

Part two of the questionnaire was not divided into groups of questions, but was a series of individual questions asking for the items described above.

The data gathered by means of this questionnaire are primarily descriptive in nature. In this research report an attempt has been made to organize the data into meaningful statements and charts that will allow an appraisal of what has been done up to this time in English options programs and to make suggestions and recommendations for improvement.

CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

RESPONSES TO THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Of the original sample of forty-nine urban and fifty-three rural schools selected for participation in the study, thirty-eight rural and thirty-four urban schools responded to the questionnaire, representing a total percentage return of seventy-one percent.

The rural principals' forms indicated that a total of fifty-two English options were being offered in those schools which responded. Forty-nine teachers of these options filled out questionnaires, which is a total of ninety-four percent of possible responses.

The urban principals' forms indicated that a total of seventy-nine English options were being offered in responding schools. Of these, sixty-eight teachers filled out the questionnaire, a total of eighty-six percent of possible responses.

The average percentage for both groups (i.e., the percentage of teachers who filled out questionnaires within the sample of responding schools) was ninety percent, or one hundred and eighteen teachers out of a possible total of one hundred and thirty one.

The following tables have been constructed to simplify interpretation of the responses to each item on the questionnaire. Each table corresponds to one questionnaire item and the tables appear in the same order as the questionnaire items.

All figures on the charts represent the percentage of teachers giving each type of response to a particular question, except for charts XXIX and XXX, for which percentages would not have been meaningful.

QUALIFICATIONS OF TEACHERS OF JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL ENGLISH OPTIONS IN ALBERTA

I. Professional Preparation

TABLE I

DISTRIBUTION OF YEARS OF TEACHER EDUCATION OF ALBERTA TEACHERS OF JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL ENGLISH OPTIONS IN PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS (Shown in percentages, 114 respondents)

Years of Teacher Education	Urban	Rural	Both
One year	1.5	10	5.3
Two years	6.1	10	7.9
Three years	10.8	18.4	14
Four years	61.5	49	56.1
Five years of more	20	12.2	16.7

Table I shows the distribution of years of teacher education of teachers of junior high school English options in participating schools. On the whole, teachers in urban schools had more years of teacher education than did teachers in rural schools. About twenty percent of rural teachers of these options had only one or two years of teacher education as compared with only seven and one-half percent of urban teachers who had only this amount.

Significantly, only sixty-one percent of rural teachers had four or five years or more of teacher education

as compared with eighty-one and one-half percent of urban teachers who had this amount of training. When both groups were combined, seventy-three percent of teachers of English options had four or more years of teacher education, while only thirteen percent had only one or two years.

II Years of Teaching Experience

TABLE II

DISTRIBUTION OF YEARS OF TEACHING EXPERIENCE OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH OPTIONS IN PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS, EXPRESSED IN PERCENTAGES (Total of 116 respondents)

Years of Teaching Experience	Urban	Rural	Both
None or less than one	9.1	8	8.6
One to three years	21.2	26	23.3
Four to six years	22.7	12	18.1
Seven to ten years	16.7	18	17.2
Eleven years or more	30.3	36	32.8

Table II shows the distribution of years of teaching experience of teachers of English options in participating schools.

There were few significant differences in years of teaching experience between urban and rural teachers of English options, except at the upper end of the scale, where more urban teachers were in the four to six year

category, whereas more rural teachers were in the category of eleven or more years of experience. When the experience of both groups was combined, the figures indicated that sixty-eight percent of teachers of English options who participated had at least four years of teaching experience.

III. Number of English Courses Taken During Post-Secondary Training

TABLE III

DISTRIBUTION OF THE NUMBER OF ENGLISH COURSES COMPLETED BY TEACHERS OF JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL ENGLISH OPTIONS IN PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS (Expressed in percentages, total of 116 respondents)

Number of Post-Secondary English Courses Completed	Urban	Rural	Both
None or one	13.4	24.5	18.1
Two	23.9	18.4	21.6
Three	14.9	14.3	10.3
Four	7.5	14.3	10.3
Five or more	40.3	28.6	35.3

Table III shows the distribution of numbers of English courses completed by teachers of English options in participating schools. The number of courses taken by urban teachers was consistently higher than the number taken

by rural teachers except for category four, and here the evidence would indicate that this was so because more urban teachers fit into the fifth category of five or more English courses. Sixty percent of the total sample of teachers had completed three or more post-secondary English courses, while eighteen percent had taken no English courses or only one.

IV. Number of Courses Taken in Curriculum Building

Table four shows the distribution of the numbers of courses taken in curriculum building by teachers of English options in participating schools. The table indicates that twenty-eight percent of urban and fifty-three percent of rural teachers had no training in this area. When the groups were combined, thirty-eight and one-half percent of the total sample had no training in curriculum building. The urban group had a consistently higher level of training in this area, except in the last category of four or more courses. In category four, however, the urban teachers were far ahead; ten percent of urban teachers had four or more courses in curriculum building as compared with only two percent of the rural sample who had this much training.

TABLE IV

DISTRIBUTION OF THE NUMBER OF COURSES COMPLETED IN CURRICULUM BUILDING BY TEACHERS OF ENGLISH OPTIONS IN PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS (Expressed in percentages, total of 117 respondents)

Number of Courses Completed in Curriculum Building	Urban	Rural	Both
None	27.9	53.1	38.5
One	27.9	18.4	23.9
Two	25	16.3	21.4
Three	10.3	2	6.8
Four or more	8.8	10.2	9.4

V. Summary

On the whole, urban teachers appeared to have more years of teacher training than did rural teachers of English options.

Urban and rural groups were roughly comparable with regard to numbers of years of teaching experience. On the whole, teachers of English options appear to have a high degree of experience, with a total of sixty-eight percent having at least four years of teaching experience.

With regard to both the number of post-secondary English courses completed and the number of courses completed in curriculum building, the urban teachers are consistently higher than the rural group.

TEACHER ATTITUDES TOWARD ENGLISH OPTIONS PRESENTLY BEING OFFERED

I. Attitudes Regarding the Merit of Offering English Options at the Junior High School Level

TABLE V

DISTRIBUTION OF TEACHER APPRAISALS AS TO THE MERIT OF OFFERING ENGLISH OPTIONS IN JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL (Expressed in percentages , total of 117 respondents)

Opinion Expressed	Urban	Rural	Both
No merit	0	2	.9
Very little merit	1.5	8	4.3
Some merit	35.8	36	35.9
Considerable merit	46.3	44	45.3
Very great merit	16.4	10	13.7

Table V shows the distribution of teacher appraisals of the merit of offering English options at the junior high school level.

A fairly large percentage of both urban and rural teachers expressed the opinion that there was either considerable or very great merit in the idea of offering English options in junior high school; sixty-three percent of the urban and fifty-four percent of the rural teachers expressed one or the other of these two views.

Slightly more than one-third of both groups expressed the view that there was some merit in offering English options in junior high school.

Significantly, only about five percent of the total sample said there was little or no merit in offering these options.

When the urban and rural groups were combined, fifty-nine percent expressed the opinion that there was either considerable or very great merit in offering these options. Another thirty-six percent said there was some merit. Ninety-five percent of the total sample said the idea of offering options had some , considerable or very great merit.

II. Teacher Attitudes Regarding the Value to Students of Options Presently Being Offered

TABLE VI

DISTRIBUTION OF TEACHER APPRAISALS OF THE VALUE TO STUDENTS OF ENGLISH OPTIONS PRESENTLY BEING OFFERED (Expressed in percentages, total of 115 respondents)

Expressed Value	Urban	Rural	Both
No value at all	1.5	0	.9
Very little value	6.1	2	4.3
Some value	50.8	52	51.3
Considerable value	33.8	40	36.5
Very great value	7.7	6	7

Table VI shows the distribution of teacher appraisals of the value to students of English options that were being taught at the time of the study.

About forty-five percent of both groups, taken both separately and collectively, expressed the opinion that English options which were being taught were of either considerable or of very great value to students. About half of both urban and rural teachers expressed the view that these options were of some value to students. Only about seven percent of the urban teachers and about five percent of the rural teachers felt that the options being taught were of either no value or of very little value to students.

III. Summary

In general, teacher opinion as to the merit of offering English options in junior high school was favourable. About sixty percent of the total sample expressed the view that there was either considerable or very great merit in the idea of offering these options.

In general, teachers also seemed to feel that the options being taught were of value to students, with only about five percent of the total sample expressing the view that they were of either little or no value.

Teachers were generally more encouraging about the merit of offering the options than they were about the value of options being taught, which would seem to suggest that many teachers see a need for improvement.

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF ENGLISH OPTIONS PROGRAMS IN ALBERTA JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOLS

I. Degree of Freedom that Teachers Have in Choosing What Option they Will Teach

Table VII shows the distribution of teacher appraisals of their degree of freedom in deciding which English option they would teach to their students.

TABLE VII

DISTRIBUTION OF TEACHER APPRAISALS OF THEIR DEGREE OF FREEDOM IN DECIDING WHAT ENGLISH OPTION TO OFFER TO STUDENTS (Expressed in percentages, total of 117 respondents)

Teacher perception of extent of freedom	Urban	Rural	Both
a. not at all	11.9	22	16.2
b. very little	4.5	4	8.5
c. to some extent	7.5	6	6.8
d. to a fairly large extent	20.9	24	22.2
e. completely	55.2	34	46.2

About sixteen percent of urban and about twenty-six percent of rural teachers said that they had little or no freedom in deciding what option to teach. The urban percentage is lower than the rural percentage of teachers expressing this view. At the other end of the scale, urban teachers

report a higher frequency of considerable and complete freedom in deciding what to teach; seventy-six percent of urban teachers expressed this view as compared with only sixty percent of rural teachers who enjoyed considerable or complete freedom in the matter. Sixty-eight percent of the combined sample said they had either considerable or complete freedom in deciding what option they would teach. In general, a higher degree of freedom is enjoyed by urban teachers in this matter.

II. The Degree to Which Teachers Were Responsible for Developing Their Own Courses of Study for English Options

TABLE VIII

DISTRIBUTION OF TEACHER APPRAISALS OF THE EXTENT TO WHICH THEY WERE PERSONALLY RESPONSIBLE FOR DEVELOPING THEIR OWN COURSE OF STUDY FOR ENGLISH OPTIONS (Expressed in percentages, total of 116 respondents)

Perceived Degree of Responsibility	Urban	Rural	Both
a. not at all	1.5	0	.9
b. to a very small extent	0	2	.9
c. to some extent	4.5	2	3.4
d. to a fairly large extent	9.1	22	14.7
e. completely	85.5	74	80.2

Table VIII shows the degree to which teachers felt they were personally responsible for developing their own course of study for English options.

Most teachers in both the urban and rural groups reported a very high degree of personal responsibility for developing their own programs; about eighty-six percent of the urban and seventy -four percent of the rural group expressed this opinion, with a combined percentage of eighty percent expressing this view.

III. Degree to Which Teachers of Individual Schools Worked Together in Developing English Options Courses and Programs

Table IX shows the extent to which teachers perceived that members of English departments in individual schools cooperated in order to produce the best possible English options program.

TABLE IX

DISTRIBUTION OF TEACHER APPRAISALS OF THE EXTENT TO WHICH STAFF MEMBERS WORKED TOGETHER IN DEVELOPING AN EFFECTIVE ENGLISH OPTIONS PROGRAM (Expressed in percentages, total of 115 respondents)

Perception of Extent of Cooperation	Urban	Rural	Both
a. not at all	16.7	26.5	20.9
b. to very little extent	22.7	22.4	22.6
c. to some extent	30.3	38.8	33
d. to a considerable extent	19.7	6.1	13.9
e. to a very great extent	10.6	6.1	8.7

A significantly higher number of urban teachers than rural teachers reported that staff members cooperated in developing English options programs, with thirty percent of urban and only twelve percent of rural teachers reporting either considerable cooperation or a very great extent of cooperation. About twenty-three percent of the combined groups reported a high degree of cooperation.

At the other end of the scale, about forty percent of urban and about forty-two percent of rural teachers reported very little cooperation among teachers in developing programs. Of the combined group, this percentage was forty-three percent.

Some extent of cooperation was reported by thirty percent of the urban and by about thirty-nine percent of the rural group, with a combined percentage of thirty-three percent.

IV. Teacher Perceptions as to the Degree to Which the Options Being Taught Enabled the Instructor to Utilize Some Special Interest, Knowledge, or Skill

Table X shows teacher perceptions as to the degree to which options being taught enable specialization in an area of special interest, knowledge, or skill on the part of the instructor. The results are roughly comparable for both groups, with about one-third of each group reporting that the option enables some extent of specialization.

TABLE X

DISTRIBUTION OF TEACHER APPRAISALS OF THE EXTENT TO WHICH OPTIONS BEING TAUGHT ENABLE TEACHERS TO UTILIZE SOME SPECIAL INTEREST, SKILL OR KNOWLEDGE (Expressed in percentages, total of 117 respondents)

Perception of extent of Specialization	Urban	Rural	Both
a. not at all	3	8	5.1
b. to very little extent	10.4	12	11.1
c. to some extent	32.8	28	30.8
d. to a considerable extent	32.8	26	29.9
e. to a very great extent	20.9	26	23.1

About thirteen percent of the urban group and about twenty percent of the rural group reported that the option being taught enabled very little or no specialization. When both groups were combined, about sixteen percent reported that this was the case.

About the same percentage of both groups, fifty-two percent, reported that the option being taught enabled them to specialize in an area of special interest, knowledge, or skill.

V . Extent of Attainment of Objectives as Reported by Teachers of English Options in Alberta Junior High Schools

Table XI shows the extent to which teachers of English options in Alberta junior high schools felt that the

objectives which they had set for their option had been or were being attained.

TABLE XI

DISTRIBUTION OF TEACHER APPRAISALS OF THE EXTENT TO WHICH OBJECTIVES OF ENGLISH OPTIONS WERE BEING ATTAINED (Expressed in percentages, total of 116 respondents)

Extent of Attainment of Objectives	Urban	Rural	Both
a. not at all	0	0	0
b. to very little extent	13.4	4.1	9.5
c. to some extent	50.7	75.5	61.2
d. to a considerable extent	34.3	18.4	27.6
e. to a very great extent	1.5	2	1.7

About thirteen percent of the urban teachers and about ten percent of the rural teachers felt that there had been little or no attainment of the objectives which they had defined for their courses. Half the urban and three-quarters of the rural teachers felt there had been some attainment of objectives. Considerable attainment of objectives was reported by about one-third of the urban teachers and by about one-fifth of the rural teachers.

When percentages in each category were combined for the two groups, a clear majority reported some attainment of objectives; sixty-one percent reported that this was the case. About one-quarter of the combined group reported considerable attainment of the objectives, while none reported no attainment and only about two percent reported considerable attainment.

VI. Freedom of Students in Electing English Options

Table XII gives a distribution of teacher appraisals of the extent to which students exercised freedom of choice in electing to take an English option.

TABLE XII

DISTRIBUTION OF TEACHER APPRAISALS OF THE EXTENT TO WHICH STUDENTS EXERCISED FREEDOM OF CHOICE IN ELECTING TO TAKE ENGLISH OPTIONS (Expressed in percentages, total of 117 respondents)

Perceived Degree of Freedom	Urban	Rural	Both
a. no choice at all	11.9	30	19.7
b. very little choice	14.9	16	15.4
c. some choice	34.3	30	32.5
d. considerable choice	23.9	14	19.7
e. complete freedom of choice	14.9	10	12.8

About twenty-seven percent of urban teachers and about forty-six percent of rural teachers reported that students had either no choice or very little choice in electing to take English options. The combined percentage was about thirty-five percent.

Roughly one-third of the sample, taken both separately and collectively, reported that students had some choice in the matter.

Considerable or complete freedom of choice was reported by about thirty-nine percent of urban teachers and by about twenty-four percent of rural teachers.

VII. The Degree to Which Teachers Perceived English Options as Meeting Student Interests

Table XIII shows a distribution of teacher appraisals of the extent to which English options were meeting the interests of students.

Only about ten percent of the sample, taken either separately or collectively, reported that English options were meeting student interests either not at all or to a very small extent. About forty percent of the urban and about forty-eight percent of the rural sample said that these options were meeting student interests to some extent, while about forty-seven percent of urban teachers and about forty-two percent of rural teachers said they were meeting student interests either to a considerable or to a very great extent.

TABLE XIII

DISTRIBUTION OF TEACHER APPRAISALS OF THE EXTENT TO WHICH ENGLISH OPTIONS THAT WERE BEING TAUGHT WERE MEETING WITH THE INTERESTS OF STUDENTS (expressed in percentages, total of 116 respondents)

Extent to Which Options Were Perceived as Meeting Student Interests	Urban	Rural	Both
a. not at all	0	0	0
b. to very little extent	10.6	10	10.3
c. to some extent	40.9	48	44
d. to a considerable extent	42.4	40	41.4
e. to a very great extent	6.1	2	4.3

VIII. Class Enrollments in English Options

Table XIV shows the distribution of average class enrollments in English options.

TABLE XIV

DISTRIBUTION OF CLASS ENROLLMENTS IN ENGLISH OPTIONS IN ALBERTA JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOLS (Expressed in percentages, total of 117 respondents)

Reported Class Enrollments	Urban	Rural	Both
a. fewer than ten students	4.5	0	2.6
b. eleven to fifteen students	4.5	4	4.3
c. sixteen to twenty students	16.4	16	16.2
d. twenty-one to twenty-five students	22.4	26	23.9
e. twenty-six or more students	52.2	54	53

Only nine percent of urban teachers and only four percent of rural teachers reported fewer than fifteen students per class. About seven percent reported fifteen students or fewer when the groups were combined. Roughly sixteen percent of both groups, taken separately or collectively , reported an average class enrollment of from sixteen to twenty students. Twenty-two percent of the urban teachers and about twenty-six percent of rural teachers reported average class enrollments of between twenty-one and twenty-five students. More than half of the teachers , taken separately or collectively, reported average enrollments of twenty-six or more students.

IX. Teacher Perceptions of the Importance of Grades as Measures of Achievement in English Options

Table XV shows the distribution of teacher appraisals of the extent to which grades were emphasized in their English options.

About forty-one percent of urban and about fifty-four percent of rural teachers reported that grades were not important in the options they were teaching. Forty percent of urban teachers and thirty percent of rural teachers reported that grades were important to some extent. Only nineteen percent of urban teachers and only sixteen percent of rural teachers attached considerable importance to grades, and none attached very great importance to grades as measures of achievement.

TABLE XV

DISTRIBUTION OF TEACHER APPRAISALS AS TO THE IMPORTANCE ATTACHED TO GRADES IN ENGLISH OPTIONS THAT WERE BEING TAUGHT (Expressed in percentages, total of 117 respondents)

Importance of Grades	Urban	Rural	Both
a. not important at all	11.8	8	10.2
b. of very little importance	29.4	46	36.4
c. of some importance	39.7	30	35.6
d. of considerable importance	19.1	16	17.9
e. of very great importance	0	0	0

X. Degree of Freedom that Students Had in Meeting Course Requirements

Table XVI shows a distribution of teacher appraisals as to the degree of freedom that students were given in deciding how course requirements were to be met.

Thirty-one percent of urban teachers and about thirty-five percent of rural teachers said that students were given very little or no freedom in deciding how individual course requirements were to be met. Thirty-two percent of urban and forty-nine percent of rural teachers said they gave students some freedom. Thirty-seven percent of urban

and only sixteen percent of rural teachers said they gave students either considerable or complete freedom in deciding how basic course requirements would be met.

TABLE XVI

DISTRIBUTION OF TEACHER APPRAISALS OF THE DEGREE OF FREEDOM THAT STUDENTS ARE GIVEN IN DECIDING HOW BASIC COURSE REQUIREMENTS ARE TO BE MET (Expressed in percentages, total of 114 respondents)

Perceived Degree of Freedom	Urban	Rural	Both
a. none at all	4.6	6.1	5.3
b. very little	26.2	28.6	27.2
c. some	32.3	49	39.5
d. considerable	33.8	14.3	25.4
e. complete	3.1	2	2.6

XI. Average Class Time Per Week Allotted to English Options

Table XVII shows the distribution of average class time per week allotted to English options in Alberta junior high schools. Almost no schools allot forty minutes or less. About twice as many rural teachers as urban teachers allot from forty-one to eighty minutes per week, the percentages being twenty-nine and sixteen respectively. About half the urban teachers allot between eighty-one and one-hundred and

twenty minutes per week, while only thirty-nine percent of rural teachers allot this amount. About thirty percent of both groups, taken separately or collectively, allot more than one-hundred-and-twenty minutes per week to English options.

TABLE XVII

DISTRIBUTION OF AVERAGE CLASS TIME PER WEEK ALLOTTED TO ENGLISH OPTIONS IN ALBERTA JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOLS (Expressed in percentages, total of 117 respondents)

Amount of Time Spent Per Week	Urban	Rural	Both
a. forty minutes or less	3	0	1.7
b. forty-one to eighty minutes	16.4	26	20.5
c. eighty-one to one-hundred-and-twenty minutes	52.2	40	47
d. one hundred-and-twenty-one to one-hundred-and-fifty minutes	20.9	8	15.4
e. more than one-hundred-and-fifty minutes	7.5	26	15.4

X. Types of English Options Being Offered

Table XVIII shows a distribution of the types of courses that were being offered in Alberta junior high schools as English options at the time of this study.

About one-quarter of the teachers who responded were offering general language arts programs. About one-fifth were offering courses in various types of reading, the majority of a developmental nature.

The three next-most-popular choices were creative writing, public speaking, and journalism.

Some really creative teachers had developed special types of options, such as television arts, library sciences, and mythology.

The majority of these options were offered on a full-year basis, the exceptions being public speaking, library sciences, speed reading, and spelling demons, some of which were offered on a half-year basis and some of which were offered for six weeks (speed reading, for example).

Class organization varied, in the vast majority of cases, with the activity, most teachers reporting that individual work, group work, and teacher-directed activiy were all used at some time.

Most courses were organized thematically.Some teachers reported that students were allowed to organize according to projects and activities.

TABLE XVIII

TYPES OF ENGLISH OPTIONS THAT WERE BEING OFFERED IN ALBERTA JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOLS DURING THE 1971-72 SCHOOL YEAR (Expressed in actual numbers of options of each type listed)

Communication and the Mass Media	2
Creative Communication	2
Creative Expression	1
Creative Writing	9
Drama	7
Journalism	8
Language Arts(General)	26
Library Sciences	1
Literature	
Canadian	1
General	2
Mythology	1
Novels	1
Poetry	1
Science Fiction, Fantasy	1
Short Story	2
Public Speaking	9
Reading	
Advanced	2
Developmental, Remedial	18
Leisure	6
Speed	1
Remedial Language	3
Spelling Demons	1
Television Arts	1
Words, Words, Words	1
Total respondents	107
Non- respondents	10

XII. Summary

With regard to the degree of freedom that teachers had in deciding what English option they would be teaching, a fairly high percentage of teachers reported either a fairly large extent of freedom or complete freedom, sixty-eight percent of the combined group expressing one or the other of these views. About twenty-five percent of the total sample said they had very little or no freedom. In general, urban teachers had a higher degree of freedom than did rural teachers.

With regard to the personal responsibility of teachers for building their own curriculum, the vast majority of teachers (eighty percent of the total sample) reported that they were completely responsible for so doing.

With regard to cooperation among teachers in order to ensure the best possible English options program, there was not generally a high degree of cooperation, but urban schools reported a higher degree of cooperation than did rural schools.

With regard to the degree to which options being taught enabled teachers to specialize in an area of special knowledge, interest, or skill, about one-third of both groups reported that the options enabled some degree of specialization, and about one-quarter reported

that the option they were teaching afforded a high degree of specialization.

With regard to the attainment of objectives, half the urban and three-quarters of the rural teachers felt there had been some attainment of objectives. More urban teachers reported considerable attainment of objectives than did rural teachers.

With regard to the freedom that students had in electing to take English options, urban teachers generally reported more student freedom than did rural teachers, about one-half of rural teachers and about one-quarter of urban teachers saying that students had some, considerable, or very great freedom. Considerable or complete freedom of choice was also reported as being higher among the urban group; about forty percent as compared with twenty-four percent among rural teachers.

In general, teachers seemed to feel that options met student interests to a fairly high extent, ninety percent of the total sample reporting that the options met student interest to some extent, to a considerable extent, or to a very great extent.

With regard to class enrollments, more than half the teachers in the total sample reported average enrollments of twenty-six or more students. Only about one-quarter of the total sample reported an average enrollment of sixteen or fewer students.

With regard to the importance of grades, fewer

than twenty percent of the teachers said they attached either considerable or very great importance to grades. Forty-six percent of the total sample reported that grades were either of no importance or of very little importance.

With regard to student freedom in deciding how course requirements would be met, about forty percent of the total sample said they gave students some freedom, while another twenty-five percent said they gave students considerable freedom.

With regard to the amount of class time per week spent on English options, about half the total sample reported that they were spending from eighty-one to one-hundred-and-twenty minutes. Thirty percent of the total sample reported spending more than one-hundred-and-twenty minutes per week.

The general picture with regard to characteristics of English options programs seemed to be as follows: teachers were given a good deal of choice regarding which options they would teach; teachers were almost totally responsible for building their own options curriculum; there was not generally a high degree of cooperation among teachers in developing options; options in general offered a fairly extensive degree of specialization; teachers in general felt that there was some attainment of objectives; there was a fair extent of choice among

students in having elected to take English options; teachers in general felt that options were meeting with student interests to at least some extent; classes in general tended toward high enrollment; teachers did not tend to attach too much importance to grades; students had a fair amount of freedom in deciding how course requirements would be met; and half the teachers of English options were offering them for from eighty-one to one-hundred and twenty minutes per week, while another third were offering them for more than one-hundred and twenty minutes per week.

FACTORS INFLUENCING THE SUCCESS OR FAILURE OF ENGLISH OPTIONS PROGRAMS IN ALBERTA JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOLS

Explanation of Charts

The next nine tables give distributions of teacher appraisals of the extent to which certain factors have influenced the success or failure of English options programs. They also give percentages of teachers rating the factor as positive or negative according to its perceived influence. Some teachers gave degree of influence without saying whether the influence had been negative or positive, necessitating the creation of a neutral category for such responses.

The number of teachers who did not respond to each item is listed at the top right corner of each chart. An explanation of symbols is given at the bottom of each chart. For the convenience of those who refer to the charts, the researcher has grouped certain categories together. These categories include "a" and "b" (no influence and very little influence), and "c" and "d" (considerable influence and very great influence).

I. Availability of Funds Required to Purchase Needed Books, Supplies, and Other Equipment (Table XIX)

This factor was rated by thirty-seven percent of the total group as having no or very little influence, by

TABLE XIX

DISTRIBUTION OF TEACHER APPRAISALS OF THE EXTENT TO WHICH ENGLISH OPTIONS PROGRAMS WERE INFLUENCED BY THE AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS TO PURCHASE NEEDED BOOKS, SUPPLIES, AND OTHER EQUIPMENT (Expressed in percentages, total of 110 respondents)

Non-respondents = 8

Extent of Influence	Urban				Rural				Both			
	P	N	Neu	T	P	N	Neu	T	P	N	Neu	T
No influence or very little influence	10.9	15.7	9.4	36	15.2	4.4	19.6	39.1	12.7	10.9	13.7	37.2
Some influence	20.3	14.1	3.1	37.5	17.4	4.3	2.2	23.9	19.1	10	2.7	31.8
Considerable influence or very great influence	14	11	1.6	26.6	13.1	21.7	2.2	37	13.6	15.5	1.8	30.9

P = positive influence

N = Negative influence

Neu = Neutral (teachers did not specify whether influence was negative or positive)

T = total of Neu, positive and negative influences in each group and in the combined group

another thirty-two percent as having some influence, and by thirty-one percent as having considerable or very great influence. Sixty-three percent of the total sample said it had either some influence, considerable influence, or very great influence. Considerably more rural teachers rated this factor as having considerable influence than did urban teachers; thirty percent as compared with an urban percentage of twenty-six percent. Forty-five percent of urban teachers and the same percentage of rural teachers rated the influence of this factor as positive, while forty percent of urban teachers and thirty percent of rural teachers rated its effect as negative. Of the total sample, forty-five percent rated the factor as having a positive effect, while thirty-seven percent rated its effect as negative. Eighteen percent did not specify as to its effect.

II. Availability of Time Required to Plan and Develop An Effective Curriculum (Table XX)

This factor was rated as having very great influence by both urban and rural teachers. Forty-nine percent of the urban teachers and thirty-four percent of the rural teachers rated the factor as having either considerable or very great influence. The combined average was forty-two percent. There was a considerable difference between the two groups in the category of "some influence", thirty-one percent of urban teachers and nearly fifty percent of rural teachers

TABLE XX

DISTRIBUTION OF TEACHER APPRAISALS OF THE EXTENT TO WHICH ENGLISH OPTIONS PROGRAMS WERE INFLUENCED BY AVAILABILITY OF TIME REQUIRED TO PLAN AND DEVELOP AN EFFECTIVE CURRICULUM (Expressed in percentages, total of 110 respondents)

Non-respondents = 8

Extent of Influence	Urban				Rural				Both			
	P	N	Neu	T	P	N	Neu	T	P	N	Neu	T
No influence or very little influence	4.8	12.7	1.6	19.1	4.3	10.6	2.1	17	4.5	11.9	1.8	18.2
Some influence	11.1	15.9	1.6	31.7	21.3	25.5	2.1	48.9	15.5	21.8	1.8	39.1
Considerable or very great influence	11.1	36.5	1.6	49.2	4.2	29.8	0	34	8.1	33.7	.9	42.7

P = positive influence

N = negative influence

Neu= neutral (teachers did not specify whether influence was positive or negative)

T = total of positive, negative, and neutral influences and totals of combinations

rating the factor as having some influence. Only twenty percent of the combined group said that the factor had very little or no influence.

The influence of this factor was reported as very largely negative, sixty-six percent of urban and sixty-eight percent of rural teachers reporting the factor as having a negative influence. Only twenty-eight percent of the combined sample reported this factor as having a positive influence.

III. Student Enthusiasm for What Was Being Done in the Options (Table XXI)

Student enthusiasm appeared to be a very influential factor, with comparable percentages of both groups (an average of sixty-one percent) rating the factor as having either considerable or very great influence. The groups were also roughly similar in the percentage (an average of thirty-five percent) reporting that this factor had some influence.

The factor was very largely positive, with about three-quarters of each group reporting it as positive.

IV. The Availability of Trained Personnel to Aid in Developing an Effective Curriculum (Table XXII)

This factor was rated by large proportions of both groups as having very little or no influence. Forty percent of the urban group and fifty-one percent of the urban group gave it this rating. Of the combined groups

TABLE XXI

DISTRIBUTION OF TEACHER APPRAISALS OF THE EXTENT TO WHICH ENGLISH OPTIONS WERE INFLUENCED BY STUDENTS' ENTHUSIASM FOR WHAT WAS BEING DONE IN THE OPTIONS (Expressed in percentages, total of 111 respondents)

Non-respondents = 7

Extent of Influence	Urban				Rural				Both			
	P	N	Neu	T	P	N	Neu	T	P	N	Neu	T
No influence or very little influence	1.5	0	0	1.5	0	6.5	0	6.5	.9	2.7	0	3.6
Some influence	29.2	7.7	0	36.9	30.4	0	2.2	32.6	29.7	4.5	.9	35.1
Considerable influence or very great influence	46.1	13.9	1.5	61.5	45.6	10.9	4.4	60.9	45.9	12.6	2.7	61.2

P = positive influence

N = negative influence

Neu= neutral (teachers did not specify whether the influence was negative or positive)

T = totals

TABLE XXII

DISTRIBUTION OF TEACHER APPRAISALS OF THE EXTENT TO WHICH ENGLISH OPTIONS WERE INFLUENCED BY AVAILABILITY OF TRAINED PERSONNEL TO AID IN DEVELOPING THE CURRICULUM (Expressed in percentages, total of 107 respondents)

Non-respondents = 11

Extent of Influence	Urban				Rural				Both			
	P	N	Neu	T	P	N	Neu	T	P	N	Neu	T
No influence or very little influence	8.1	16.1	16.1	40.3	4.4	35.6	24.4	64.4	6.7	24.3	19.6	50.5
Some influence	21	11.3	3.2	35.5	13.3	8.9	2.2	24.4	1 8.4	10.3	2.8	30.8
Considerable influence or very great influence	19.4	4.8	0	24.2	4.4	6.7	0	11.1	13.1	5.6	0	18.7

P = positive influence

N = negative influence

Neu = neutral (teachers did not indicate whether the influence was negative or positive)

T = totals

half rated this factor as having little or no influence, thirty percent rated it as having some influence, and only nineteen percent rated it as having considerable or very great influence.

Half the urban group and about one-fifth of the rural group rated the influence of this factor as positive (a significantly greater percentage of urban teachers than of rural teachers). Thirty-two percent of the urban and fifty-three percent of the rural teachers rated its influence as negative. However, thirty-five percent of this fifty-three percent (rural) was in the category of little or no influence. The inference that can be drawn is not therefore of the magnitude that might otherwise be supposed. Of the combined groups, the factor was rated as positive by thirty-eight percent and as negative by forty percent of teachers.

V. Enthusiasm of Teacher Due to Having an Opportunity to Utilize Some Special Knowledge, Interest, or Skill (Table XXIII)

Half the urban teachers and about two-fifths of rural teachers said this factor had either considerable or very great influence. Another thirty-five percent of urban and fifty percent of rural teachers said it had some influence. Of the combined groups, forty-five percent rated it as having considerable or very great influence, forty-one percent rated it as having some influence, and only

TABLE XXIII

DISTRIBUTION OF TEACHER APPRAISALS OF THE EXTENT TO WHICH ENGLISH OPTIONS PROGRAMS WERE INFLUENCED BY ENTHUSIASM OF TEACHER DUE TO HAVING AN OPPORTUNITY TO UTILIZE SOME SPECIAL KNOWLEDGE OR SKILL IN A SPECIFIC AREA (Expressed in percentages, total of 110 respondents)

Non-respondents = 8

Extent of Influence	Urban				Rural				Both			
	P	N	Neu	T	P	N	Neu	T	P	N	Neu	T
No influence or very little influence	9.5	1.6	4.8	15.9	6.4	2.1	4.3	12.8	8.2	1.8	4.5	14.5
Some influence	33.3	0	3.2	34.9	42.6	0	6.4	48.9	37.3	0	4.5	40.9
Considerable or very great influence	44.4	3.2	1.6	49.2	36.2	0	2.1	38.3	40.9	1.8	1.8	44.5

P = positive

N = negative

Neu = neutral (teachers did not specify whether the influence was negative or positive)

T = totals

fifteen percent rated it as having no influence or very little influence.

Eighty-seven percent of the urban group and eighty-five percent of the rural group rated this factor as having a positive influence on the program.Only about four percent of the combined sample reported it as having a negative effect.

VI. Administrative Cooperation and Backing (Table XXIV)

The majority of both urban and rural teachers rated this as a factor having great influence on the program. Seventy-eight percent of urban and sixty-two percent of rural teachers rated it as having either considerable or very great importance. Of the combined groups, seventy-one percent rated it as having considerable or very great influence, about twenty percent rated it as having some influence, and only nine percent rated it as having very little or no influence.

Urban teachers rated this factor as having very great positive influence on the program; seventy -eight percent said it was a considerable or very great positive influence. Fifty-eight percent of rural teachers said it was a very great positive influence. Eighty-nine percent of the combined groups rated the influence of this factor as positive.

TABLE XXIV

DISTRIBUTION OF TEACHER APPRAISALS OF THE EXTENT TO WHICH ENGLISH OPTIONS PROGRAMS WERE INFLUENCED BY ADMINISTRATIVE COOPERATION (Expressed in percentages, total of 111 respondents) Non-respondents = 7

Extent of Influence	Urban				Rural				Both			
	P	N	Neu	T	P	N	Neu	T	P	N	Neu	T
No influence or very little influence	1.6	1.6	1.6	4.7	6.4	0	8.5	14.9	3.6	.9	4.5	9
Some influence	15.6	0	1.6	17.2	17	4.3	2.1	23.4	16.2	1.8	1.8	19.8
Considerable or very great influence	78.1	0	0	78.1	57.4	2.1	2.1	61.7	69.4	.9	.9	71.2

P = positive

N = negative

Neu = neutral (teachers did not specify whether the influence was positive or negative)

T = totals

VII. Sufficiently Broad Training to Generate Workable Ideas for English Options (Table XXV)

Forty percent of urban and thirty-three percent of rural teachers rated this factor as having either considerable or very great influence. Another forty-three percent of urban and fifty-seven percent of rural teachers said it had some influence. Of the combined groups, fifteen percent reported little or no influence, about half reported some influence, and about thirty-five percent reported considerable or very great influence.

Seventy-four percent of urban teachers rated the effect of this factor as positive, while seventy-three percent of rural teachers rated its effect as positive. Only seventeen percent of the combined group reported its influence as negative.

VIII. Ability of Teachers to Accept and Carry Out the Responsibility for Curriculum Building (Table XXVI)

Sixty-five percent of urban and only forty-one percent of rural teachers reported that this factor had considerable or very great influence. About thirty percent of urban and about forty percent of rural teachers reported that it had some influence. It was reported as having little or no influence by three percent of urban and seventeen percent of rural teachers. In general, rural teachers considered the factor less important than did

TABLE XXV

DISTRIBUTION OF TEACHER APPRAISALS OF THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE ENGLISH OPTIONS PROGRAMS WERE INFLUENCED BY SUFFICIENTLY BROAD TRAINING TO GENERATE WORKABLE IDEAS FOR ENGLISH OPTIONS (Expressed in percentages, total of 109 respondents)

Non-respondents = 9

Extent of influence	Urban				Rural				Both			
	P	N	Neu	T	P	N	Neu	T	P	N	Neu	T
No influence or very little influence	9.5	6.3	1.6	17.5	10.9	2.2	0	10.9	10.1	4.6	.9	14.7
Some influence	36.5	6.3	0	42.9	43.5	6.5	6.5	56.5	39.4	6.4	2.7	48.6
Considerable or very great influence	28.6	11.1	0	39.7	19.6	8.7	4.3	32.6	24.8	10.1	1.8	36.7

P = positive

N = negative

Neu = neutral (teachers did not specify whether the influence was negative or positive)

T = totals

TABLE XXVI

DISTRIBUTION OF TEACHER APPRAISALS OF THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE ENGLISH OPTIONS PROGRAMS WERE INFLUENCED BY PERSONAL ABILITY OF TEACHERS TO ACCEPT AND CARRY OUT THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR CURRICULUM BUILDING (Expressed in percentages, total of 110 respondents)

Non-respondents = 8

Extent of Influence	Urban				Rural				Both			
	P	N	Neu	T	P	N	Neu	T	P	N	Neu	T
No influence or very little influence	3.1	0	0	3.1	6.5	4.3	6.5	16.7	4.5	1.8	2.7	9.1
Some influence	26.6	3.1	1.6	31.3	32.6	6.5	2.2	41.3	29.1	4.5	1.8	35.5
Considerable or very great influence	56.3	7.8	1.6	65.6	32.6	6.5	2.2	41.3	46.4	7.3	1.8	55.5

P = positive

N = negative

Neu = neutral (teachers did not specify whether the influence was negative or positive)

T = totals

urban teachers.

Eighty-six percent of urban and eighty percent of rural teachers reported that this factor had a positive influence. Urban teachers saw this positive influence as being greater than did rural teachers, with fifty-six percent of urban and only thirty-two percent of rural teachers reporting the factor as having considerable or very great positive influence.

IX. Cooperation Among English Teachers to Ensure the Best Possible Program (Table XXVII)

About half of the combined group saw this factor as having very little influence on the program, with slightly more rural than urban teachers reporting that this was the case. About one-quarter of the combined group saw this factor as having some influence, with rural teachers again reporting that this was the case in slightly greater numbers. There was a considerable difference between the number of urban teachers reporting this factor as having considerable or very great influence and the number of rural teachers reporting that this was the case, the percentages being thirty-three and thirteen respectively. Of the combined groups, about half reported very little or no influence, one-quarter reported some influence, and one-quarter reported considerable or very great influence.

TABLE XXVII

DISTRIBUTION OF TEACHER APPRAISALS OF THE EXTENT TO WHICH ENGLISH OPTIONS PROGRAMS WERE INFLUENCED BY COOPERATION AMONG ENGLISH TEACHERS TO ENSURE THE BEST POSSIBLE PROGRAMS (Expressed in percentages, total of 106 respondents)

Non-respondents = 12

Extent of Influence	Urban				Rural				Both			
	P	N	Neu	T	P	N	Neu	T	P	N	Neu	T
No influence or very little influence	6.6	24.6	14.8	45.9	11.1	31.1	13.3	55.6	8.5	27.4	14.2	48.6
Some influence	16.4	4.9	0	21.3	20	6.7	4.4	31.1	17.9	5.7	1.8	24.8
Considerable or very great influence	24.6	8.2	0	32.8	6.7	4.4	2.2	13.3	16.9	6.6	.9	24.5

P = positive

N = negative

Neu = neutral (teachers did not specify whether the influence was negative or positive)

T = totals

About forty percent of the groups, taken both separately and collectively, reported this factor as having had a negative influence on the program. Forty-three percent of the combined group reported its influence as having been positive.

X. Summary

Of the factors that were dealt with in this portion of the study, the ones that were reported as having had the most highly positive effect were student enthusiasm for what was being done, administrative cooperation and backing, teacher training and background in the field of English, and teacher training in curriculum building. Other factors which emerged as having had quite a positive effect were teacher enthusiasm and the availability of funds to purchase books, supplies, and other equipment. Two factors seemed to have very little influence on the program, either positive or negative- the availability of trained personnel to aid in developing curriculum, and cooperation among teachers of individual schools to ensure the best possible program.

THE THREE MOST IMPORTANT FACTORS INFLUENCING THE DEVELOPMENT OF ENGLISH OPTIONS PROGRAMS

I. Teacher Perceptions of Success or Failure of Programs

On this part of the questionnaire, teachers were

asked whether they considered their options successful, unsuccessful, or successful in some respects and unsuccessful in others. Table XXVIII shows the percentages of teachers giving each type of response.

TABLE XXVIII

DISTRIBUTION OF TEACHER APPRAISALS AS TO THE SUCCESS OR FAILURE OF OPTIONS IN ENGLISH (Expressed in percentages, total of 109 respondents)

	Urban	Rural	Total
Success	32.2	21.3	27.5
Failure	16.1	14.9	15.6
Both	51.6	63.8	56.8

Non-respondents = 8/117 (five urban, three rural)

About one-third of urban teachers reported that their options were successful, as compared to about one-fifth of rural teachers who reported that this was the case. A high percentage of both urban and rural teachers reported that their options were a success in some respects but a failure in other respects.

More rural than urban teachers classified their options as both successful and unsuccessful, with sixty-four percent of rural and only fifty-two percent of urban teachers reporting this as being the case. Relatively small percentages of both groups, sixteen for urban and fifteen for rural, said they considered their options to be failures. Of the combined groups, more than half said their options were successful in some respects and unsuccessful in other respects, while about one-quarter of the combined group reported that their options were successful.(Success was defined as reasonably good attainment of the objectives that teachers had defined for their courses.)

II. Factors Influencing the Success of Programs

Table XXIX shows the distribution of teacher appraisals of the three most important factors influencing the success of English options. The numbers on this table represent the number of times each factor was mentioned as being of first,(M.I.= most important) second,(S.M.I.= second most important) or third (T.M.I. = third most important) in order of importance as it influenced the development of the programs.

In urban schools, there were three factors that were most often mentioned as being influential: student interest and enthusiasm; administrative support and cooperation; and flexibility of approach and subject

TABLE XXIX

DISTRIBUTION OF TEACHER APPRAISALS OF THE THREE MOST IMPORTANT FACTORS INFLUENCING THE SUCCESS OF ENGLISH OPTIONS PROGRAMS IN ALBERTA JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOLS (expressed in raw numbers, total of 88 respondents)

		Urban				Rural				
		M. I.	S.M.I.	T.M.I.	T	M.I.	S.M.I.	T.M.I	T	T
Students:										
a. Interest and enthusiasm	a.	10	8	1	19	16	6	1	23	42
b. Freedom of choice in electing option and choosing activities within it	b.	3	3	1	7	4	5	0	9	16
c. Student maturity, ability to work independently	c.	0	1	2	3	0	0	0	0	3
Personnel:										
d. Administrative support and cooperation	d.	8	4	1	13	1	4	1	6	19
e. Availability of trained personnel to aid in developing curriculum	e.	2	3	0	5	0	0	1	1	6
f. Cooperation of English teachers within schools	f.	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	2
g. Teacher enthusiasm and interest	g.	4	0	3	7	3	1	3	7	14
h. Training and background in English	h.	2	4	2	8	0	1	1	2	10
i. Teaching ability	i.	1	1	1	3	0	0	0	0	3
j. Ability of teachers to develop curr.	j.	0	0	2	2	0	3	1	4	6
Option Being Taught										
k. Flexibility of time scheduling to make best use of facilities	k.	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1
l. Control of which students got an option	l.	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1
m. Flexibility of approach/ subject matter	m.	5	4	3	12	5	1	1	7	19
n. Lack of pressure re grades	n.	0	1	2	3	0	1	1	2	5
o. Availability of resources and funds	o.	2	1	4	7	2	3	2	7	14
p. Low enrollment	p.	1	1	0	2	2	2	2	6	8
q. Importance of option to school life	q.	3	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	3
r. Support from students and teachers in other classes	r.	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1

matter. Training and background in the field of English was mentioned often, as were freedom of choice for students, teacher enthusiasm and interest, and availability of funds.

The factor most often mentioned by rural teachers was student interest and enthusiasm. Other factors that were often mentioned were freedom of choice for students, teacher enthusiasm and interest, flexibility of approach and subject matter, and availability of resources and funds.

When group totals were combined, the following rank ordering emerged (from most to least often mentioned): student interest and enthusiasm; administrative support and cooperation and flexibility of approach (equal rank); freedom for students; teacher interest and enthusiasm and availability of resources (equal rank); training and background in English; low enrollment in English options; ability of teacher to develop curriculum and availability of trained personnel (equal rank); lack of pressure re grades; student maturity, teacher's ability, and the importance of the option to school life (equal rank); the cooperation of English teachers; flexibility of scheduling, control of students going into an option, and support from students and teachers in other classes (equal rank).

III. Factors Influencing the Failure of Programs

Table XXX shows the distribution of teacher appraisals of the three most important factors hindering the success of

TABLE XXX

DISTRIBUTION OF TEACHER APPRAISALS OF THE THREE MOST IMPORTANT FACTORS INFLUENCING THE FAILURE OF ENGLISH OPTIONS PROGRAMS IN ALBERTA JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOLS (expressed in raw numbers, total of 88 respondents)

Factors		Urban				Rural				Total
		M.I.	S.M.I.	T.M.I.	T	M.I.	S.M.I.	T.M.I.	T	
Students:										
a. Lack of interest and enthusiasm	a.	5	4	1	10	4	2	1	7	17
b. Lack of freedom in electing option	b.	3	3	1	7	8	3	0	11	18
c. Too wide a range of ability within the class	c.	2	1	1	4	1	1	0	2	6
d. Poor attitudes re "options"	d.	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	4	4
e. Lack of maturity, capacity for independent work, too much freedom	e.	2	2	1	5	0	0	0	0	5
f. Lack of ability in English	f.	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Personnel:										
g. Lack of trained personnel to assist in developing the option	g.	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	2	2
h. Lack of cooperation among teachers	h.	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	2	3
i. Poor teacher attitudes re "options"	i.	0	0	0	0	0	3	1	4	4
j. Lack of teacher training in English	j.	4	0	0	4	1	0	2	3	7
k. Lack of teaching ability in options	k.	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1
l. Lack of training in curriculum dev't	l.	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	2	2
Option Being Taught:										
m. Lack of planning time	m.	7	5	2	14	1	2	0	3	17
n. Lack of facilities, resources, funds	n.	5	6	3	14	3	6	2	11	25
o. Lack of structure within course	o.	4	0	1	5	4	0	1	5	10
p. Overlapping with core curriculum	p.	2	1	0	3	1	2	0	3	6
q. over-enrollment	q.	1	1	3	5	5	6	1	12	17
r. Lack of variety, flexibility	r.	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	2

English options.

In urban schools, two factors emerged as being of highest importance - a lack of planning time and a lack of facilities, resources and funds. The two factors that were next in rank order of importance were lack of interest and enthusiasm on the part of students and lack of student freedom in electing the option.

In rural schools, over-enrollment was most often mentioned as a detrimental factor, closely followed in importance by lack of student freedom in electing the options and by a lack of facilities, resources and funds.

With both groups combined, the following rank ordering of factors detrimental to the success of options programs emerged: lack of facilities , resources, and funds; lack of student freedom in electing options;lack of student interest and enthusiasm, lack of planning time and over-enrollment (equal rank); lack of structure within options; lack of training in the field of English; too wide an ability range within classes and overlapping with the core curriculum (equal rank); lack of maturity on the part of students; poor student attitudes re options and poor teacher attitudes re options (equal rank); lack of cooperation among teachers; lack of trained personnel, lack of teacher training in curriculum development, and lack of variety and flexibility within courses (equal rank); students' lack of ability in English and lack of teaching ability re options (equal rank).

IV. Summary

The factors most often mentioned as having influenced the success of programs were student interest and enthusiasm, administrative cooperation, flexibility with regard to approach and subject matter, freedom of choice for students, and availability of funds.

The factors most often mentioned as having been detrimental to the success of programs were a lack of planning time, a lack of facilities and funds, over-enrollment, lack of student freedom in electing options, and lack of interest on the part of students.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to examine the nature of the academic English options that were being offered in Alberta junior high schools during the 1971-72 school year. Of special interest to the researcher were teacher qualifications and experience, teacher attitudes toward English options, characteristics of options programs in existence at the time of the study, factors exerting both positive and negative influences upon English options programs, and descriptions of options being taught, with special reference to content, objectives, activities and materials.

The information for this study was obtained by means of questionnaires which were mailed to teachers of English options in participating schools. Some of the limitations of this report are as follows:

1. Since only seventy-one percent of the schools that were selected to take part in the study actuallly responded, the information contained herein is valid only insofar as the respondents are representative of the total sample.
2. Many of the questionnaire items required an opinion or a value judgment on the part of teachers. The conclusions that result from this type of question are naturally subject to limitations having to do with the degree to which responses represent a true picture.

3. Options and the factors which are likely to impinge upon their success are likely to change rapidly. This report could, at best, only describe the way the program was functioning at the time of the study.

4. Some of the conclusions which follow did not apply to all schools in the study. In the attempt to generalize, exceptions were of necessity often overlooked.

CONCLUSIONS

On the basis of teacher responses, the following conclusions may be drawn:

1. The objectives of English options programs as outlined in the 1970 Junior High School Handbook are being attained to a fairly great extent.

2. Teachers of English options are generally well trained and well-experienced, with the urban group being slightly better trained than the rural group.

3. Teachers in general are favourable to the idea of offering English options in junior high school.

4. Teachers in general feel that the options being taught are valuable to their students.

5. Teachers are almost totally responsible for building their own options curriculum.

6. Teachers have a good deal of choice about which English option they will teach.

7. Within individual schools, there is not generally a very great extent of cooperation in developing English options programs.
8. The options being taught enable a fairly high degree of specialization on the part of the teacher in an area of special competence or interest.
9. In general, there is fairly extensive attainment of the objectives that teachers have outlined for their options.
10. In general, students have a fair amount of freedom in deciding which options to take, with urban students experiencing greater freedom than rural students in this regard.
11. In general, courses being taught are meeting student interests to a fairly great extent.
12. Class enrollment tends to be high in English options.
13. Grades are not seen as being of very great importance by a majority of English options teachers.
14. Students have considerable freedom in deciding how to meet course requirements in English options.
15. The majority of English options are being offered for more than eighty minutes per week.
16. About one-quarter of the English options that are being taught are in the area of reading, about one-quarter are general language arts courses, and the rest are special courses.
17. Classroom organization varies with the activity in the

majority of cases, with a combination of teacher-directed activity, individual work, and small group work.

18. Most English options are being offered on a full-year basis.
19. Most courses are organized thematically, if at all, with many teachers allowing students to organize courses as they see fit.
20. A majority of teachers feel that their options are a success in some respects but a failure in others.
21. The three factors that seem to be most influential in determining the success of English options programs are student interest and enthusiasm, administrative cooperation and backing, and flexibility of approach and subject matter. Also frequently mentioned are student freedom in electing options and teacher interest and enthusiasm.
22. The three factors that seem to be most influential in determining a lack of success are lack of facilities, resources, and funds, lack of student freedom in electing options, and lack of student interest and enthusiasm. Also frequently mentioned are a lack of planning time and overenrollment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

On the basis of the findings and conclusions of this

study, several recommendations can be made:

1. In view of the fact that teachers are almost totally responsible for developing their own curriculum(even though about one-third of urban and more than half of rural teachers had no training in the area) it is recommended that in-service workshops be instituted whereby teachers who lack such training can partially make up for this deficiency. It is further recommended that at least one course in curriculum building be a required part of the degree program leading to secondary certification.
2. It is recommended, in view of the fact that almost fifty percent of rural and about one-third of urban students had very little or no choice in electing to take English options, that such options not be offered in schools where student freedom of choice is not possible.
3. It is recommended that options English class enrollments be limited to no more than twenty students, since reported enrollments are so high.
4. It is recommended that special funds be made available for the purchase of books and supplies necessary to the program where they have not hitherto been forthcoming.

5. It is recommended that more trained personnel be made available in rural areas to aid in developing curriculum.

6. It is recommended that teachers of options be given no less than one hour per week of planning time for the purpose of developing their programs.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

This study was a state-of-the-field survey. As such, it did not delve very deeply into the why, but concentrated upon the what. In future studies, here are some areas that might be explored:

1. What are the correlations between certain things, such as:
    a. Teacher training and attitude toward options?
    b. Availability of funds and reported success of programs?
    c. Years of teaching experience and reported success of options?
2. What are some of the reasons for rural teachers being generally less enthusiastic about options programs than urban teachers?

Some other areas of interest might be:

1. What is being done in other countries, for example Britain and the United States, with regard to English options?

2. How do students see English options in comparison with the way teachers see them?
3. Are there discrepancies between teacher perceptions of what is happening in options classes and professional observer perceptions? It might be interesting to do a comparison study to determine whether this is so.

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APPENDIX A

Department of Secondary Education
University of Alberta
Edmonton
Friday, February 18, 1972

To Principals of Junior High Schools in the Province of Alberta

Dear Sirs:

I wonder if I might solicit your cooperation and that of teachers of junior high school English options in your schools in assisting with the following study?

As part of my Master of Education degree program, I am carrying out a study of academic English options in Alberta junior high schools. This study has the following purposes: to discover what is being done in the area of English options at this level; to try to discover what factors seem to be most influential in determining the success or failure of such programs; and to have teachers evaluate the extent to which the original objectives of these programs are being attained.

I hope the study will be of practical value in assisting teachers with their programs. The results of the study and lists of ideas and materials are therefore going to be made available, upon request, to any teachers who want them.

The questionnaire is a fairly lengthy one, requiring possibly half an hour for completion. I feel, however, that the time will be well spent in terms of the information that will accrue. I thank the busy teachers in advance for giving me their time.

Principals are requested to have teachers of academic English options in the junior high grades only (not teachers of group A options) fill out one questionnaire for each option that a teacher is offering. When all questionnaires are completed, it is requested that they be sent back in the enclosed self-addressed envelope as soon as possible. The completion of the study would be greatly facilitated if this could be done no later than March 20, 1972.

In addition, principals are requested to fill out the enclosed Principal's Form and to send it back with the questionnaires.

Your invaluable cooperation is very much appreciated. I do hope that teachers will find the materials that emerge as a result of this study of great benefit in planning their English options programs.

Yours truly,

Mrs. Ruth Bohnec, Grad. Student, U of A.

Principal's Form

Instructions

If your school is not offering academic English options at the junior high school level (those designated as B options in the curriculum guide) do Part A. If your school is offering such options, do part B. Part C is optional.

Part A

The decision as to whether or not academic options will be offered has been left up to individual schools and school boards. Explain briefly the circumstances that make it impossible, undesirable, or difficult to offer academic options in the field of English.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Part B

How many English teachers are there in your JHS grades? _____

How many English options are being offered? (Count the same option offered at different times by the same teacher as one option, but if two teachers are offering the same option, count this as being two options.) _____

(This should correspond to the number of questionnaires being returned if all teachers fill in their questionnaires. We need to know the percentage returned.)

Part C

The following information is optional. It will simply give us the information as to which schools replied to the questionnaire. Complete confidence with regard to the confidentiality of all information received is assured.

Name of School _____

Address of School _____

Principal _____

Thank you so much for your time!

APPENDIX B

Questionnaire for Teachers of Junior High School English Options

Introduction

Your help is greatly appreciated in aiding with the following study of English options at the Junior High School level. Please complete the enclosed questionnaire and return it to your principal's office at your earliest convenience.

Before you begin, let me tell you something about the purposes of this research project, which are threefold: to find out what is being done in the area of English options at the Junior High School level; to find out what methods and materials have been most useful in developing these English options; and to determine, as far as possible, what factors are most influential in contributing to the success and/or failure of options English programs.

In order to make the findings of the study serve some practical use, and to compensate the busy teachers who have been kind enough to take part in the study, let me offer you, upon request after July 15, 1972, from Mrs. Ruth Bohnec, at 9216-151 St. in Edmonton, Alberta, a resume of the findings and a list of ideas and materials that might be useful to you in developing an effective options program.

Copies of this questionnaire have been sent to teachers of English in fifty urban and fifty rural Junior High Schools in Alberta. Each teacher is asked to complete one questionnaire for each English option that he/she is teaching in the current year, and to base his/her answers on the work that is being done in the present year. Neither the individuals participating in the study, nor the schools in which they teach, will be associated with any of the findings of the study. All responses will be regarded as confidential.

Please respond as fully as you can, particularly in the free response section, as the value of this part of the study is directly dependent upon the willingness of particpating teachers to share their ideas with others. Thank you once more for aiding in my research project.

N.B. - Please answer the questionnaire on the basis of the work being done in the current school year.

Questionnaire for Teachers of Junior High School English Options

A. Training and Experience - Circle the letter of the appropriate answer.

1. How many years of teacher training do you have as credited for salary purposes?

a. one year
b. two years
c. three years
d. four years
e. five years

2. How many years of teaching experience do you have as credited for salary purposes?

a. none or less than one year
b. one to three years
c. four to six years
d. seven to ten years
e. eleven years or more

3. How many English courses have you completed at university or teachers' college?

a. one or none
b. two
c. three
d. four
e. five or more

4. How many courses have you completed that offered some instruction in curriculum building?

a. none
b. one
c. two
d. three
e. four or more

B. Attitude Towards Option Being Offered

1. What merit do you feel there is in the idea of offering English options at the junior high school level?

a. no merit at all
b. very little merit
c. some merit
d. considerable merit
e. very great merit

2. Of what value to students (in your opinion) is the option that you are presently teaching?

a. of no value at all
b. of very little value
c. of some value
d. of considerable value
e. of great value

C. General Characteristics of Options Programs in English

1. To what extent were you give the freedom to decide what English option(s) you would be offering?

a. not at all
b. very little
c. to some extent
d. to a fairly large extent
e. completely

2. To what extent were you personally responsible for developing the option once the basic topic had been decided upon?

a. not at all
b. to very little extent
c. to some extent
d. to a fairly large extent
e. completely

3. To what extent did the teachers of your school combine their personal and material resources in order to offer the best possible English options program?

a. not at all
b. to very little extent
c. to some extent
d. to a considerable extent
e. to a very great extent

4. To what extent does the option that you are teaching enable you to specialize in som area in which you have special interest, knowledge, and/or skill?

a. not at all
b. to very little extent
c. to some extent
d. to a considerable extent
e. to a very great extent

5. What degree of success would you say you have had in attaining the original objectives of your option as you perceive them?

a. none at all
b. very little
c. some success
d. considerable success
e. very great success

6. To what extent do you feel that students had a degree of choice in electing to take the option that you are teaching?

a. no choice at all
b. very limited choice
c. some choice
d. a good deal of choice
e. complete freedom of choice

7. To what extent do you feel that the option you are teaching is meeting the interests of the students who are taking it?

a. not at all
b. to very little extent
c. to some extent
d. to a fairly large extent
e. to a very large extent

8. What is the enrollment in your English option?

a. fewer than ten students
b. eleven to fifteen students
c. sixteen to twenty students
d. twenty-one to twenty-five students
e. twenty-six or more students

9. To what extent are grades considered to be of importance by yourself and your students in this option?

a. not at all
b. to very little extent
c. to some extent
d. to a considerable extent
e. to a very great extent

10. What degree of freedom are students given in deciding how basic course requirements are to be met?

a. none at all
b. very little
c. some
d. quite a lot of freedom
e. complete freedom

11. How much time per week is spent in class on this option?

a. 40 minutes or less
b. 41-80 minutes
c. 81-120 minutes
d. 121-150 minutes
e. more than 150 minutes

D. Factors Influencing the Development of the English Options Programs

Rate the importance of each of the following factors as you feel they have influenced the degree to which you have been able to offer an effective English options program. Circle the letter of the appropriate answer.

Indicate by a check whether the influence has been negative or positive.

1. Availability of funds to purchase needed books, supplies, and other equipment.
   a. no influence
   b. very little influence
   c. some influence
   d. considerable influence
   e. very great influence

   negative influence _____
   positive influence _____

2. Availability of time required to plan and develop an effective curriculum.
   a. no influence
   b. very little influence
   c. some influence
   d. considerable influence
   e. very great influence

   negative influence _____
   positive influence _____

3. Enthusiasm on the part of your students for what is being done in this option.
   a. no influence
   b. very little influence
   c. some influence
   d. considerable influence
   e. very great influence

   negative influence _____
   positive influence _____

4. Availability of trained personnel to aid in developing the curriculum.
   a. no influence
   b. very little influence
   c. some influence
   d. considerable influence
   e. very great influence

   negative influence _____
   positive influence _____

5. Enthusiasm on your part in having an opportunity to utilize special skills and/or knowledge in a specific area.
   a. no influence
   b. very little influence
   c. some influence
   d. considerable influence
   e. very great influence

   negative influence _____
   positive influence _____

6. Cooperation on the part of administrators in allowing the necessary freedom to carry out your ideas.
   a. no influence
   b. very little influence
   c. some influence
   d. considerable influence
   e. very great influence

   negative influence _____
   positive influence _____

7. Sufficiently broad training in the field of English to be able to generate valuable, workable, and interesting ideas for options.
   a. no influence
   b. very little influence
   c. some influence
   d. considerable influence
   e. very great influence

   negative influence _____
   positive influence _____

8. Personal ability on your part to accept and carry out the responsibility for building your own curriculum.
   a. no influence
   b. very little influence
   c. some influence
   d. considerable influence
   e. very great influence

   negative influence _____
   positive influence _____

9. A pooling of the resources of all English teachers in the school so that the best possible English options program could be offered.
   a. no influence
   b. very little influence
   c. some influence
   d. considerable influence
   e. very great influence

   negative influence _____
   positive influence _____

Most Important Factors Influencing Success and/or failure of Program to Meet Objectives

Instructions: If you feel that your program has been successful in meeting the objectives as you perceived them, answer section one, listing in the order of their importance the three factors that you see as being most influential in determining its success.

If you feel that your program has not succeeded in meeting the objectives as you perceived them, please list in order of their importance, the three factors that you see as having been detrimental to its success. Answer section two.

If you feel that your program has been successful in some respects but unsuccessful in others, answer both section one and section two, listing in order of importance the factors that you feel have contributed to the success of the program and those that have been detrimental to its success.(Three in each case not necessary unless appropriate.)

In all sections, you may use the factors mentioned on page three if you wish. Do not hesitate to add others that you feel may have been overlooked and which you feel have influenced your program in some way.

Section One - Factors Influencing the Success of the English Options Program

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Section Two - Factors Influencing the Lack of Success of the English Options Program

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Questionnaire - Part Two Information About the Option Being Presently Taught

In this part of the study I am concerned with gathering good ideas and suggestions for English options and with compiling lists of materials that have proven helpful in developing these options. Please answer as fully as possible in order to share your invaluable ideas with others.

1. What is the title of your option? If there is no specific title, provide a bit of information as to what is being done in the course re content.

_____

_____

2. What are the major objectives of the option that you are offering? (May be content or process objectives or both.)

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

3. Does your option concentrate on any specific area, such as study of the novel, poetry, short story, or on any specific skill area such as free reading, remedial reading, creative writing, speaking and debating, etc.? If so, in what special area?

_____

4. If you have some specific guidelines as to the content that you will be attempting to cover in your option please list titles. (Use back if necessary.)

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

USE BACK OF PAGE IF NECESSARY

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

5. Please list any books, audio-visual aids, course guides, magazines etc. that have been helpful to you in developing your option. Include, where possible, such information as title, source, etc. that might be helpful in obtaining the material.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

6. What special activities have you found to be useful and enjoyable in connection with your option? If you have any good ideas for displays, speakers, field trips, etc. please include them.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

7. What methods of classroom organization are you using? Are students working primarily in small groups, working independently, or working as a class under teacher direction? Perhaps you are varying the organization to suit the activity. Please comment.

_____

_____

_____

_____

8. If you are organizing course content, how are you doing it? (Thematically, chronologically, or in some other way.)

_____

_____

_____

9. For what length of time during the school year is your option being offered to each class that takes it?(Quarter year, half-year, full year, etc.)

_____

Thank you so much for your cooperation! Please don't forget to request copies of the ideas and materials that result form the study.

APPENDIX C

LIST OF PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS

The researcher wishes to express her most sincere thanks to the following schools and their personnel for taking part in the study:

Rural Schools

Alix Junior High School

Banff Junior High School

Bawlf Junior High School

Bowden Junior High School

Brooks Junior High School

Cardston Junior High School

Consort Junior High School

Cremona Junior High School

Delburne Junior High School

Dr. Swift Junior High School (Lac La Biche)

Ellerslie Junior High School

Foremost Junior High School

Fort Saskatchewan Junior High School

F.P. Walshe Junior High School (Ft. Macleod)

Georges P. Vanier Junior High School (Morinville)

Glendon Junior High School

Grand Centre Junior High School

Haythorne Junior High School (Sherwood Park)

Hay Lakes Junior High School

Hines Creek Junior High School

Hughendon Junior High School

Innisfail Junior High School

Lacombe Junior High School

Leduc Junior High School

Mallaig Junior High School

Matthew Halton Junior High School (Pincher Creek)

Olds Junior High School

Provost Junior High School

Redwater Junior High School

Ryley Junior High School

St. Thomas Aquinas Junior High School (Provost)

Sedgwick Central

Sexsmith Junior High School

Spruce Grove Junior High School

Sylvan Lake Junior High School

Two Hills Junior High School

Vilna Junior High School

Warburg Junior High School

Worsley Junior High School

Urban Schools

Calgary Public Schools

Currie Junior High School

Elboya Junior High School

E.P. Scarlett Junior High School

Ian Bazalgette Junior High School

Georges P. Vanier Junior High School

Sherwood Junior High School

Senator Pat Burns Junior High School

Viscount Bennett Junior High School

Calgary Separate Schools

Bishop Pinkham Junior High School

Our Lady of Assumption Junior High School

St. Alphonsus Junior High School

St. Matthews Junior High School

Edmonton Public Schools

D.S. MacKenzie Junior High School

Hardisty Junior High School

Hillcrest Junior High School

Lawton Junior High School

Parkdale Junior High School

Londonderry Junior High School

Steele Heights Junior High School

Strathearn Junior High School

Westminster Junior High School

Westmount Junior High School

Edmonton Separate Schools

Cartier McGee Junior High School

Louis St. Laurent Junior High School

St. Basil's Junior High School

St. Cecelia's Junior High School

St. Thomas More Junior High School

Other Urban Schools

Central Junior High School (Lethbridge)

Clear Vista Junior High School (Wetaskiwin)

Hamilton Junior High School (Lethbridge)

Queen Elizabeth Junior High School (Wetaskiwin)

Sir John Thompson Junior High School (St. Albert)

St. Thomas Aquinas Junior High School (Red Deer)

Note - Some schools did not identify themselves. To them I also give thanks for their participation.

APPENDIX D

DESCRIPTIONS OF ENGLISH OPTIONS THAT WERE BEING TAUGHT IN ALBERTA DURING THE 1971-72 SCHOOL YEAR

What follows is a description of the courses that were being offered in English as options in the junior high schools of Alberta during the year that this study was carried out (1971-72).

An attempt has been made to make this appendix as useful as possible to teachers who wish to make use of it in developing their programs. In order to prevent duplication of ideas, closely related courses have been grouped together. Included for each option are the following things: title, course objectives, course content, and a list of suggested activities. Since many of the materials that were suggested are useful in more than one course, the list of materials is at the end of this appendix.

The researcher wishes to acknowledge her indebtedness to the many teachers who gave so freely of their ideas in order to make this list of suggested options possible.

Communication and the Mass Media

A. Objectives

1. To enable students to understand advertising and propaganda techniques.
2. To give students an understanding of the effects of mass media on our lives.
3. To familiarize students with a number of media.

B. Content

1. The history of communications.
2. Radio, television, books, magazines, and newspapers as media of communication.
3. Other media - music, signals, etc.

C. Suggested Activities

1. Field trips to newspaper offices and television stations.
2. Study and collection of newspaper advertisements.
3. Study of television advertisements.
4. Guest lectures by experts from the various fields connected with the mass media.

Creative Communication and Expression

A. Objectives

1. Improvement of oral and written communication.
2. Experimentation with various modes of communication.
3. A gaining of insight as to how mass society communicates.
4. A gaining of insight as to how we communicate with our peer groups.
5. An exploration of how the people of the past communicated and in what forms (poetry, plays, dances, etc.)
6. Improvement in self-expression.

B. Content

1. Oral communication.
2. Written communication.
3. Communication without words.
4. Communication by means of specific senses.

C. Suggested Activities

1. Oral communication - speaking, debating, doing skits, and doing impromptu talks.
2. Written communication - creative writing (tall tales, limericks, parodies, short stories, etc.); illustrating no-word stories; involvement with and creation of word games, quizes and puzzles; word study; cartooning and illustrating; and writing advertisements.
3. Communication without words - role playing, pantomimes
4. Listening activities - video-taping class presentations, puppet theatres, creative dance.

Creative Writing

A. Objectives

1. To encourage students to develop their writing talent.
2. To give students practice in writing of various literary types: poetry, prose, articles, plays.
3. To provide opportunities for students to share their interests, ideas, and achievements with others.
4. To provide opportunities for students to express their ideas, to stimulate their imaginative powers, and to teach them to enjoy words and sounds.
5. To provide basic understanding of various literary forms.
6. To encourage improvement in content and in technique in student writing.
7. To foster the desire to write and express oneself creatively.

B. Content

1. Writing of various kinds: exposition, narration, description; articles, plays, stories, poetry

2. Study of good writing of various types - reading plays, stories, etc, in attempt to understand how writers achieve the desired effects

C. Suggested Activities

1. Illustrate poetry.
2. Make collages representing themes.
3. Allow class presentations by individuals and groups.
4. Use films, filmstrips, and records.
5. Write plays, stories, poems, advertisements, cartoons, etc.
6. Use records to create mood.
7. Save the best class work and publish it in the form of a journal.
8. Present student plays with the use of puppets.
9. Produce television shows.
10. Tape record and play back student presentations.
11. Write and illustrate stories for very young children.
12. Write comic strips.
13. Make up "original thought" posters.

Drama

A. Objectives

1. To gain knowledge of skills required for play production.
2. To acquire knowledge about the history of theatre.
3. To develop the ability of students to write and act out short skits and plays.
4. To foster the acting ability of students and to teach them to enjoy self-expression through acting.
5. To encourage student interest in effective use of voice.
6. To motivate oral reading (especially poor students).

B. Content

1. Study of a series of short plays.
2. Writing of students' own short plays.
3. Acting out plays and their adaptations.
4. Acting out of student plays.

C. Suggested Activities

1. Writing, producing and criticizing short plays.
2. Presenting plays to other classes, etc.
3. Producing a T.V. play using video-tape.

Journalism

A. Objectives

1. To edit and publish a school newspaper
2. To learn the processes involved in newspaper publication.
3. To strengthen language skills.
4. To prepare students to discriminately and critically evaluate news reporting.
5. To encourage students to take the initiative in keeping well-informed by becoming regular readers of one or more newspapers.
6. To develop the skill and habit of using the newspaper as a source of information.
7. To give students an opportunity to assume the various roles connected with news publishing.
8. To assist the student in developing skills necessary to organize and write articles.

B. Content

1. Study of the processes of publication.
2. Study of style, copy reading, layout, etc.
3. Writing various types of news features - news, sports, editorials, feature articles, ads, etc.
4. Study of sales techniques and their importance.

C. Activities

1. Small groups, led by editors, produce various sections of the school newspaper.

2. Take students to one large and one small news publisher so that they can compare methods.
3. Produce a school newspaper or yearbook.
4. Invite guest speakers from the news media.

Language Arts (General)

A. Objectives

1. To create an interest in and an appreciation for language and literature.
2. To develop creativity in all forms of expression.
3. To rectify some reading disabilities and to encourage students to read widely.
4. To improve skills of listening and discussing.
5. To teach students to think logically and creatively.
6. To further students' command of the English language by providing opportunities for student-selected projects at all levels.
7. Enrichment and remediation in English.
8. To subject students to a variety of interesting topics inherent in a study of English but not dealt with in the normal core curriculum.
9. To explore various literary genres.
10. To improve leisure reading interests and skills.
11. To facilitate the correct use of the English language.
12. To study writing technique.

B. Content

1. Leisure reading.
2. Remedial reading; reading for comprehension.
3. Problems in logic.
4. Cryptography.
5. Creative writing.
6. Language games.
7. Debates, discussion. logical argument.
8. Front page challenge.
9. Vocabulary study.

10. Study of style and content in good writing.
11. Study of various literary genres.
12. Public speaking.
13. Critical reading and analysis .
14. Journalism.
15. Speed reading.
16. Study of word meaning and origin.
17. Spelling.
18. Study of the mass media.

C. Special Activities

1. Field trip to a book bindery.
2. Field trip to a newspaper.
3. Public speaking and role playing.
4. Debating contests.
5. Making book jackets.
6. Memorizing favourite poems.
7. Doing book reports.
8. Writing biographies and autobiographies.
9. Producing a newspaper.
10. Use of pictures to inspire creative writing.
11. Oral class presentation of compositions.
12. Make up original commercials for imaginary products.
13. Make up occasion cards with original verses.
14. Make travel folders.
15. Make up crossword puzzles.

Library Sciences

A. Objectives

1. To impart to students an understanding of library organization.
2. To instruct students in the use of reference materials.
3. To foster an enjoyment of books.

B. Content

1. The Dewey decimal system
2. Card cataloguing
3. Reference Materials
   a. almanacs
   b. yearbooks
   c. dictionaries
   d. periodical index
   e. tapes
   f. readings

C. Activities

1. If possible, students should be taken to a larger library for a visit.

Literature

Canadian Literature

A. Objectives

1. To familiarize students with some of our Canadian literary works and authors.
2. To promote understanding of different literary forms.
3. To encourage reading in the area of Canadian literature.

B. Content

1. Stories and poems from the old Prose and Poetry series and from Safaris.
2. Students do their own reading from Canadian novels, poetry, short stories, etc. (see lists of materials)

C. Activities

1. Guest lectures by Edmonton writers, such as Gillese, Wiebe, Elsie Gowan.
2. Have as many books etc. available in the room as possible.
3. Student discussion of certain books, authors, etc.

General Literature Courses

A. Objectives

1. To encourage leisure reading for enjoyment.
2. To foster literary appreciation and an interest in literature.
3. To encourage literary talent.
4. To provide students with "models" for different types of creative writing.
5. To try to provide students with stimulating literature which reflects their own stage of development and which reflects their value system.

B. Content

1. Cheaper by the Dozen
2. Call of the Wild
3. Animal Farm
4. Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde
5. My Family and Other Animals
6. Short stories:

   "Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge"
   "Flowers for Algernon"
   " Bayonet Attack"
   "Unknown Soldier"

7. Plays:

   "The Merchant of Venice"
   "The Secret"

C. Activities

1. Oral reports and discussions of literary works.
2. Making up and acting short skits.
3. Discussing and studying types of books and special styles of authors.

Mythology (Greek Myths and Related Literature)

A. Objectives

1. An appreciation for and a knowledge of Greek mythology.
2. An understanding of the influence of Greek mythology on Western literature.

3. An understanding of comparisons between mythologies, especially themes.
4. Fostering of certain skills- researching topics, reporting, speaking.

B. Content

1. The geography and culture of Greece.
2. The purposes of myth.
3. Myths regarding the origins of God, man, and the universe.
4. Exploits of major gods and heroes.
5. Exploits of Theseus.
6. Study of Renault's novel, King Must Die.
7. The Trojan wars.
8. The Odyssey.
9. Comparisons with Hebrew, Norse, Egyptian and Indian mythologies.
10. Applications of myth in literature.

C. Activities

1. Imaginative mythologizing developed by groups to suit certain imagined cultures.

Novel

A. Objectives

1. To promote understanding of the characteristics of the novel as a special literary genre.
2. To encourage students to read widely.

B. Content

1. See lists of materials (students select their own reading from suggested lists.)

C. Special Activities

1. Discussion of authors, types of books, etc.

Poetry

A. Objectives

1. To foster an appreciation for many types of poetry.
2. To promote understanding of the poet's craft.
3. To give students an opportunity to develop their own talents in writing poetry.

B. Content

1. Characteristics of poetry in general and of different types of poetry.
2. The relation of poetry to art and music.
3. An introduction of periodic literature.
4. Discussion of various rhyme and stanza forms.

C. Activities

1. Oral and silent reading and discussion of many poems of different types.
2. Student interpretation of poetry through music, picture displays, puppet shows.
3. Panel discussions and student evaluations.

Science Fiction and Fantasy in Literature

A. Objectives

1. An understanding of the historical background of science fiction and fantasy in literature.
2. A knowledge of science fiction and fantasy writers and their works.
3. Understanding of different styles in science fiction.
4. An understanding of the results of science fiction on human life.

B. Content

(This was a new course just being developed. The teacher did not list any specific content. The researcher takes the liberty of making some suggestions.)

Content - Cont'd

Verne, Jules. Journey to the Centre of the Earth

20,000 Leagues Under the Sea

The Mysterious Island

Lawrence, D.H. "The Rocking -Horse Winner"

Short Story

A. Objectives

1. To expose students to a variety of short stories by famous writers.
2. To make students aware of the contributions of Canadian writers in the realm of the short story.
3. Practice in analyzing the components of the short story.
4. To give students opportunities to write their own short stories.
5. To promote understanding of the importance of the short story to modern literature.

B. Content

1. "The Necklace" by de Maupassant
2. "Gift of the Magi" by O.Henry
3. Stories about Sherlock Holmes
4. Animal stories by Seton, Roberts, and Kipling
5. Science fiction stories
6. National stories - Spanish, Irish, French, German, Jewish
7. Lamb's Tales From Shakespeare
8. Boy scout stories
9. Humorous stories - Leacock, Twain, Mowat
10. London's "to Build a Fire"
11. Kantor"s "The Man Who Had No Eyes"

C. Activities

1. Oral analysis of short stories by students.
2. Student comparison of different types of stories.
3. Free reading; listening to records, films; listening to songs that contain stories.
4. Discussion of stories in class.
5. Occasional lectures.

Public Speaking

A. Objectives

1. To improve speaking skills by providing a wide variety of speaking opportunities for students.
2. To foster self-confidence in oral expression.
3. To improve students' listening skills.
4. To foster understanding of oral language and the way it is used.
5. To develop poise and confidence in public speaking.
6. To learn to prepare speeches which have different appeal for different types of audiences.
7. To learn the principles of good speaking.
8. To develop skills of enunciation, articulation, and projection.
9. To make students aware of differences among various types of public address.
10. To analyze the skills and deficiencies of students and to help them improve.

B. Content

1. Debating
2. describing
3. convincing
4. promoting
5. individual speeches and reports
6. group discussion
7. skits, plays, choral speech

C. Suggested Activities

1. Record and play back student talks.
2. Model parliament.
3. Debating teams.
4. Sales presentations.
5. Interviewing public figures and other adults.
6. Making cartoon posters depicting what not to do when speaking publicly.
7. Practice listening for detail.
8. Put on oral T.V. programs with news, sports, weather, etc.
9. Invite speakers from Toastmaster's Club.

Reading

Advanced Reading

A. Objectives

1. To prepare students to do research.
2. To encourage free reading on a wide basis.
3. To teach reading comprehension.

(This course was evidently just being developed. The teacher made no specific suggestions as to activities. As regards content, only "Time" magazine was mentioned.)

Developmental Reading

A. Objectives

1. To develop the ability to comprehend and interpret the literal, implied, and inferred meanings in reading materials.
2. To develop habits of reacting critically to ideas that are met with in reading.
3. Development of specific skills - comprehension, word study, reading rate,etc.
4. To encourage leisure reading.
5. To develop flexibility in reading by providing a wide range of reading experiences in "light" and "heavy" materials.
6. To improve study techniques.
7. To improve listening and retention skills.

8. To bring students' reading up to their grade level in ability.
9. To increase and enrich vocabulary.

B. Content

1. Overcoming detrimental reading habits such as regression, short eye span, and sub-vocalization.
2. Multiple reading processes - overview, preview, read, postview.
3. Improving listening techniques.
4. Word recognition
   a. visual-auditory perception
   b. pronunciation
   c. structural analysis
5. Word meanings.
6. Reading flexibility.
7. Making inferences.
8. Skimming and scanning.
9. Study techniques
10. Techniques of retention.
11. Study skills.

C. Activities

1. Use of listening centres, tape recorders.
2. Diagnostic testing so that students can determine and rectify their weaknesses.
3. Use of the controlled reading machine.
4. Comics cut out to be put back into proper sequence.
5. Reading to students by teachers.
6. Dramatizations of parts of books.
7. Climb the non-fiction ladder.
8. "Finish the story."

Leisure Reading

A. Objectives

1. To develop an interest in and a liking for reading.
2. To sample many kinds of reading.
3. To provide students with an opportunity to read widely from materials of their own choosing.
4. To foster awreness of the relationship between literature and life.
5. To encourage students to explore different authors and their styles.

B. Content

1. To be made widely available and chosen at the discretion of students.

C. Activities

1. Students read half-time from a prescribed area:
   a. biography and autobiography
   b. historical novel
   c. books of poetry
   d. short story collections
   e. mystery
   f. Canadian novels
   g. science fiction
   h. classics
   i. plays
   j. non-fiction

Speed Reading

A. Objectives

1. To teach students to improve their reading speed.
2. Better and more efficient use of reading materials.

B. Content

(Teacher used the course guide from a speed-reading course offered at University of Alberta. No other suggestions were offered.)

Remedial Language

A. Objectives

1. To help students overcome the difficulties they were having with various aspects of language.

B. Content

1. Sentence structure.
2. Grammar.
3. Spelling.
4. Paragraphing.

C. Materials

None suggested.

Spelling Demons

A. Objectives

1. To help students with specific spelling problems.

B. Content

1. Diagnosis of the specific errors made by each child and subsequent work in the area of difference .

c. Activities

1. Use of the Science Research Associates Spelling Laboratory.

Television Arts

A. Objectives

1. To help students develop a critical awareness of T.V. as an instrument of communication.
2. To help students understand the limitations and the potential of radio, television, and newspapers as media of communication.
3. To offer students the opportunity to develop their skills in radio-television communication.

4. To involve students in stimulating experiences in human communication.

5. To offer students an opportunity to work with cameras,, VTR units, and other audio-visual aids.

6. To produce direct classroom television programs.

B. Content

1. Definition of communications: What is it? Why is it needed? Why is it important?

2. Types of communication: radio, television, movies, magazines, and newspapers.

3. The daily newspaper. A study of the various sections.

4. The radio station.

5. Television - history of its development, changes in our society as a result of T.V.

6. The television program: types of programming, scheduling, purposes of various programs, etc.

7. Writing for television.

8. Television directing, the television camera, and program presentations.

9. How to give a speech on television.

C. Activities

1. Field trip to television stations and radio stations.

2. Displays - student T.V. productions on video tapes, underground newspaper, advertising campaigns.

3. Student-produced programs on certain themes - love, patriotism, war, beauty, courage, religion, peace, freedom, death, etc.

Words, Words, Words

A. Objectives

1. To foster student awareness of words, their relationships, meanings, and origins.

2. To use words in playing games.
3. To improve reading skills through promoting an understanding of language through the study of words.

B. Content

1. Scrabble , Lexicon, Keyword, Crossword puzzles
2. Kangaroo words
3. Mirror words
4. Group words
5. "Sound" words
6. Synonyms, antonyms, homonyms
7. Invented words
8. New words in our language
9. Changing words
10. Dialects
11. Words needed for special activities, locations, etc.
12. Interesting words with special endings
13. Where names come from (people, places)
14. Containers

C. Activities

1. Students play many different word games.
2. Students illustrate word families.

LIST OF SUGGESTED MATERIALS FOR TEACHING ENGLISH OPTIONS

CANADIAN LITERATURE[1]

Books: (Reference books for teachers are starred)

Ayre, Sketco the Raven. Toronto: Macmillan, 1961.

Belaney, Archibald (Grey Owl), Pilgrims of the Wild. London: Lovatt Dickson, 1935.

A Book of Grey Owl. Toronto: Macmillan, 1964.

Sajo and Her Beaver People. London: Davies, 1935.

*Berton, Pierre (editor), Great Canadian Writing. Toronto: Weekend Magazine, McLelland and Stewart, 1965.

Berton, Pierre, The Golden Trail, The Secret World of Og, The Story of the Klondike. Toronto: Mc Lelland and Stewart.

Braithwaite, Max, Why Shoot the Teacher? Toronto: McLelland and Stewart, 1965.

Boyle, Harry J., Mostly in Clover. Clarke Irwin, 1965.

*Callaghan, Morley, Morley Callaghan's Stories. Toronto: The Macmillan Company, 1959.

*Carman, Bliss, Later Poems. Toronto: McLelland and Stewart, 1921.

Chalmers, J. W., Prose and Poetry for Canadians. (Journeys, Adventures, Enjoyment). Toronto: Dent, 1951. Safaris. Toronto: Dent, 1968.

English Council, ATA, An Icecreamcone Feeling in the Dark of December. (Anthology of writing by Alberta students). Edmonton, 1969.

Gallico, Paul, The Snow Goose.

*Garvin, J. W., Canadian Poets. Toronto: McLelland and Stewart, 1926.

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[1] This option was developed by the researcher. Since it happened to appear in the study, it is included here.

G llese, J.P., Kirby's Gander.
Chinook Arch. Edmonton: Alberta Government, 1967.

* Gustafson, Ralph, The Penguin Book of Canadian Verse. London:

Haig-Brown, Roderick, Saltwater Summer. The Whale People.
Toronto: Morrow and Company, 1948 and 1963.

Harris, Christie, Cariboo Trail. Toronto: Longman's, 1957.

* Hooke, H.M., One-Act Plays From Canadian History.Toronto: Longman's , 1945. Thunder in the Mountains. New York: Oxford University Press, 1947.

* King, Carlyle, A Book of Canadian Poems.(An Anthology for Secondary Schools) Toronto: McLelland and Stewart, 1963.

* Klinck, Carl F., Canadian Anthology.Toronto: Gage, 1966.

Leacock, Stephen, Laugh With Leacock, Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town, Frenzied Fiction, and Further Foolishness. Toronto: McLelland and Stewart.

* Milne, W.S. Curtain Rising. Toronto: Longman's, 1958.

Mitchell, W.O.,Jake and the Kid. Toronto: Macmillan, 1961.
Who Has Seen the Wind? Macmillan, 1947.

Montgomery, Elizabeth, Anne of the Island.(Many others in this series) Toronto: Ryerson Press.

Mowat, Farley, Owls in the Family, The Dog Who Wouldn't Be, The Boat That Wouldn't Float, Lost in the Barrens, Never Cry Wolf. Toronto: McLelland and Stewart.

* Pacey, Desmond, A Book of Canadian Stories, Creative Writing in Canada, Ten Canadian Poets, and The Selected Poems of C.G.D. Roberts. Toronto: Ryerson Press.

*Purdy, Al, North of Summer. Toronto: McLelland and Stewart, 1967.

Peterson, L., "The Great Hunger." (Play) Agincourt: Book Society of Canada, 1967.

*Pickthall, Marjorie. The Complete Poems of Marjorie Pickthall. Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1927.

Raddall, Thomas, The Rover and Son of the Hawk. Toronto: Macmillan.

*Rand, T.H., A Treasury of Canadian Verse. Toronto: William Briggs, 1915.

*Richards, Canada on Stage. Toronto: Clarke Irwin, 1960.

Roberts, C.G.D., Animal Stories of C.G.D. Roberts. London: J.M. Dent, 1967.

*Robins and Ray, A Book of Canadian Humour. Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1951.

Scott, F.G., Poems by F.G. Scott. London: Constable and Company, 1910.

Service, Robert W., Collected Poems of Robert Service. Toronto: Dodd, Mead, 1970.

Shaw, H., Greg Clark War Stories. Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1964.

Sluman, Blackfoot Crossing. Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1959.

*Smith, A.J.M., The Book of Canadian Poetry. Chicago University, 1959. A.J.M. Smith: Collected Poems. Oxford University Press, 1962.

Van Steen, M., Pauline Johnson: Her Life and Work. Toronto : Musson Book Company, 1955.

Wood, Kerry, The Map Maker, The Queen's Cowboy, The Medicine Man, Samson's Long Ride, Three Mile Bend. Toronto: Ryerson Press.

Films: (National Film Board)

"My Financial Career" (Leacock)

"Political Dynamite" (Mitchell)

CREATIVE WRITING

Leavitt, H.P., Stop, Look, and Write. New York: Bantam, 1964.

Reeves, Ruth, Ideas for Teaching English. Champaign, Illinois: NCTE, 1966.

"Let's Write" (magazine)

"Read" (magazine) (This magazine holds creative writing contests)

DRAMA

Cavanaugh and Trip, The Players. Books One and Two.

Miller, H.L. Plays for Teenagers.

Taylor, D. "Five in Judgment" Scholastic Scope, Sept. 28, 1970.

"Scope" and "Voice" magazines. Published by Scholastic Book Services, Richmond Hill, Ontario.

GENERAL LANGUAGE ARTS

Teacher Aids:

Alberta English

English Journal

Council Notes From English Council of ATA

Books for Students:

Scholastic Magazine's "Voice", "Scope", "Junior Scholastic"

Scholastic Books: Adventure Series

Mass Media

Books

Adams, Julian, Press Time. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1963.

Diamond, Robert, Guide to Instructional Television. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964.

Hall, Horner, Interviewing, Junior High Journalism, and News Reporting. (Source unknown)

Post, Homer A., News in Print. New York: Richards Rosen Press, 1967.

Stasheff and Bretz, The T.V. Program: Direction and Production. New York: Hill and Wang.

Wesche, L.E. Advising the Student Newspaper. New York: Pageant Press, 1966.

Aids

Scholastic Books Communications Pac Multi-Media Kit

Mythology

Books

Graves, A., Greek Gods and Heroes.

McLean, Adventures of Greek Heroes.

Hamilton, Mythology.

Kerr, Myth

Macpherson, Four Ages of Man.

Poetry

Books

Applegate, When the Teacher Says Write Another Poem .

Chase et al, Values in Literature.(pp. 283-369)

Corbin, R., Poetry (One and Two)

Koch, K., Wishes, Lies, and Dreams.New York: Chelsea House, 1970.

Merriam, Eve, It Doesn't Always Have to Rhyme.New York: Atheneum, 1966.

Petty, W.T., Slithery Snakes.

"Holiday" Magazine

Teacher References:

Chalmers, J.W., Prose and Poetry Series. Toronto: J.M. Dent, 1951. Safaris Series. Toronto: J.M. Dent, 1968.

Gutteridge, Don, Language and Expression.

Harbrace College Handbook

Reeves, Ruth, Ideas for Teaching English. Champaign Illinois: NCTE, 1966.

Smith, N.B., Be a Better Reader. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1968.

General Literature Options

Films

"A Christmas Carol"
"Cromwell"
"legend"
"Half-Masted Schooner"
"Railrodder"
"Story Theatre" (T.V.)

Books for Students

Hilo Series of Books (High-interest, low vocabulary)
And Then There Were None by Agatha Christie
Street Rod
Tom Sawyer
Huckleberry Finn

Magazines for Students

"Seventeen"
"Field and Stream"

Books for Teachers

Chase, Jewett, and Evans, Values in Literature.

Library Sciences

Books

A Guidebook for Teaching Library Skills (Books One and Two)

Alberta Poetry Yearbook

English Through Experience

The Leaf, Not the Tree (Gage)

Time for Reading (Arbuthnot)

Magazines

"Media and Methods"

"New Horizons" "Wavelengths 31"

"Read"

Films

"I Must Go Down to the Sea Today" (masefield)

Reading

Teacher Reference Books

Dechant, E., Diagnosis and Remediation of Reading Disability.

Harris, A.J., How to Increase Reading Ability. New York: David McKay, 1961.

Korbin, Robert, Teaching Reading in Secondary School. New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1964.

Markscheffel, N.D., Better Reading in Secondary School. New York: Ronald Press, 1966.

Shafer and McDonald, Success in Reading.Books One and Two) New Jersy: Silver Burdett, 1967.

Smith, N.B., Be a Better Reader. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall.

Spache, Improving Reading Techniques.

Better Reading for Canadian Schools.

Van Zandt, E. (Editor), Patterns for Reading.

Weiss, M.J., Reading in Secondary Schools.New York: Odyssey Press, 1961. Tactics in Reading. Scott, Foresman.

Zintz, M.V., Corrective Reading. Dubuque: William Brown and Company, 1966. Breaking the Reading Barrier.

Texts

Galaxy Reading Series(Thrust, Focus, Vanguard)

Open Highways (Books Seven and Eight) Scott, Foresman, 1967.

Magazines

"Teen"

"Ingenue"

Miscellaneous Aids

Reader's Digest Books

Scholastic Literary Units

Newsletters from banks

Collier Macmillan's Advanced Reading Skills

SRA kits and individual programs

McCall-Crabb tests and lessons

Word Attack

Secondary School Reading Handbook (Dep't. of Education, Edmonton)

Phonetic Word Drill Cards (Kenworthy)

EDL Reading Machine

Mott Basic Language Skills Program

Listen and Read (Educational Development Laboratories, Hurlington, New York)

Words

Word Games

Scrabble	Scribbage
Spill'N' Spell	Perquacky
Probe	Tul'a Bet

Filmstrip

"The Origin of Our Language"

Books

Wagner, Hosier, Blackman, Language Games.

Words are Important, (Book Society)

Other

Reader's Digest "Word Power"

Crossword Puzzle Books

"Scope" magazine (Scholastic)

APPENDIX E

COMMENTS OF PRINCIPALS AND TEACHERS ABOUT ENGLISH OPTIONS

The following comments constitute a representative sample of those that were made on the questionnaires. Most of these comments are rather negative about the options program. This was not because most of the responding teachers were negative in their views but was due to the tendency of those who did have negative views to comment more frequently, while those who tended to have more favourable views (as indicated in their responses to structured items) did not very often add additional comments.

COMMENTS OF PRINCIPALS

1. "Options in this school are offered on the basis of teacher competency and student demand. Student demand for English options has been meagre up to the present time."
2. "There is no difficulty in offering English options, but students do not choose this option too often. Since we offer all our options on a choice basis, when there are not enough students to make up a class, the option cannot be offered."
3. "Teachers are not too anxious(to teach English options) because time is required to prepare new courses."
4. "...speed reading and other associated electives offered for half-year terms have proven fairly satisfactory."
5. "Many teachers are using materials suitable for English

options in the regular language arts program as there is room for flexibility. Other options, such as journalism, can be correlated with the school newspaper and offer relevancy needed."

6. "Not many students look upon literature or language arts as studies worthy of their consideration... their previous experiences in language arts have 'turned them off'."

COMMENTS OF TEACHERS

1. "Students object to doing <u>any</u> work in an options course."
2. "Difficult to organize because there is no set curriculum and no help in planning one."
3. "A constant battle of wits to survive!"
4. "The lack of specific direction to students often leaves them at a loss to select worthwhile activities. A lot of time is noticeably wasted."
5. "Class much too large."
6. "Half this class wanted to take the course. The other half didn't."
7. "Teacher-directed activities usually least successful."
8. "I was told that I would be offering a junior high option about September 3rd. Choose my own and call it what I want."
9. "Reading is a compulsory option in our school. This results in disinterested students."
10. "I like the freedom to make up the curriculum."

11. "I feel inadequate in the field of curriculum planning."

12. "Most teachers are not in favour of the freedoms extended to students in options and it sometimes is noticeable, even when students are doing very worthwhile work."